





L. D. Cobb

















Upham, Charles Wentworth

# L I F E

EXPLORATIONS AND PUBLIC SERVICES

OF

JOHN CHARLES FREMONT.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

For thou wert of the *mountains*; they proclaim  
The everlasting creed of liberty.

BRYANT.

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## P R E F A C E .

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THE second and third chapters of this work, embracing the period covered by the first two expeditions, have substantially the value and authority of an autobiography. Fremont tells his own story, in passages extracted from his Reports. This part of the volume gives, with the accompanying illustrations, a perfectly authentic account—as good as can be found—of the interior of the North American continent, its great features, and the races that occupy it. The Rocky Mountains, the parallel range of the Sierra Nevada, with the Basin—so full of strange interest, and not yet wholly made known to geography—between them ; and the Pacific regions, are here described, in his own fresh and effective style, by their explorer.

The topics of the work, generally, are regarded by the writer as having an interest and dignity entirely independent of any of the excitements and political operations of the day ; and it has been prepared with

no other feeling than to present what men of all parties and sections will hereafter, at all times, recognize as a true picture of a character and a life that have justly attracted attention, and will occupy a permanent place in our annals.

The facts have been, in part, gathered from public records, and sources open to all. Many of the details and dates, with some very interesting documents, were obtained from Col. Fremont. But for all the sentiments and opinions advanced in the work, the writer is wholly and exclusively responsible.

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# LIFE OF FREMONT.

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## CHAPTER I.

### PARENTAGE—EDUCATION—EARLY HISTORY.

JOHN CHARLES FREMONT was born on the 21st of January, 1813. The usual residence of his family was in the city of Charleston, South Carolina. His father, who bore the same name, was deeply interested in studying the character and condition of the North American Indians, and spent the last years of his life in visiting many of their tribes. On these excursions he took his family with him, and moved slowly, stopping leisurely at the larger towns and points of chief interest. It was on one of these tours that the subject of this memoir was born, in the city of Savannah. The father, following his favorite pursuit, subsequently visited with his family, and remained, for greater or less periods of time, in various parts of Georgia, Tennessee,

the Carolinas, and Virginia. The mother, celebrated for her beauty and worth, was Ann Beverly Whiting, a native of Gloucester County, Virginia. Her family was connected with many distinguished names, including that of Washington, to whom she was nearly related.

The father died in 1818, leaving a widow and three children, two sons and a daughter. Col. Fremont is the sole survivor of his family, with the exception of an orphan niece, the daughter of his brother, who since nine years of age has been a member of his family. The mother died in 1847, at Aiken, South Carolina; the brother and sister some years before.

After the death of her husband, Mrs. Fremont remained some time in Virginia, where John Charles received the rudiments of his education, at Dinwiddie Court House. She then removed back to Charleston, where she fixed her residence, and the education of her children was continued. Although born and reared in affluence, and accustomed to the free and liberal expenditures of the hospitable and generous class to which her Virginia relatives belonged, she was left, with her young charge, in very limited circumstances, but, fortunately in a community which appreciated her claims to respect, sympathy, and all kind offices. She is still remembered by many faithful friends in Charleston, as a lady of great piety and worth.

When John Charles was about thirteen years of age, John W. Mitchell, Esq., a lawyer in Charleston, a gentleman of great respectability, in no way connected with the family, but actuated only by benevolent impulses, although perceiving, it is not unlikely, the bright promise of the lad, took him into his office for the purpose of making a lawyer of him. At a subsequent period, it became a favorite object of Mr. Mitchell, to have him prepare himself for the ministry of the church.

Mr. Mitchell placed him under the tuition of Dr. Robertson, a learned instructor at that time in Charleston, and now engaged in the same employment in Philadelphia. Dr. Robertson published an edition of Xenophon's *Anabasis*, in 1850. In the preface he gives the following account of the youth whom Mr. Mitchell placed in his hands. It is a most interesting document, and shows how the character, which Col. Fremont has ever exhibited, was formed, and illustrates the early development of the energy and talent that have borne him on through life:—

“For your further encouragement, I will here relate a very remarkable instance of patient diligence and indomitable perseverance.

“In the year 1827, after I had returned to Charleston from Scotland, and my classes were going on, a very respectable lawyer came to my school, I think some time in the month of Octo-



ber, with a youth, apparently about sixteen, or perhaps not so much, (fourteen,) of middle size, graceful in manners, rather slender, but well formed, and, upon the whole, what I should call handsome; of a keen, piercing eye, and a noble forehead, seemingly the very seat of genius. The gentleman stated that he found him given to study, that he had been about three weeks learning the Latin rudiments, and (hoping, I suppose, to turn the youth's attention from the law to the ministry,) had resolved to place him under my care for the purpose of learning Greek, Latin, and Mathematics, sufficient to enter Charleston College. I very gladly received him, for I immediately perceived he was no common youth, as intelligence beamed in his dark eye, and shone brightly on his countenance, indicating great ability, and an assurance of his future progress. I at once put him in the highest class, just beginning to read Cæsar's Commentaries, and, although at first inferior, his prodigious memory and enthusiastic application soon enabled him to surpass the best. He began Greek at the same time, and read with some who had been long at it, in which he also soon excelled. In short, in the space of one year he had with the class, and at odd hours with myself, read four books of Cæsar, Cornelius Nepos, Sallust, six books of Virgil, nearly all Horace, and two books of Livy; and in Greek, all Græ-



ca Minora, about the half of the first volume of Græca Majora, and four books of Homer's Iliad. And whatever he read, he retained. It seemed to me, in fact, as if he learned by mere intuition. I was myself utterly astonished, and at the same time delighted with his progress. I have hinted that he was designed for the Church, but when I contemplated his bold, fearless disposition, his powerful inventive genius, his admiration of warlike exploits, and his love of heroic and adventurous deeds, I did not think it likely he would be a minister of the Gospel. He had not, however, the least appearance of any vice whatever. On the contrary, he was always the very pattern of virtue and modesty. I could not help loving him, so much did he captivate me by his gentlemanly conduct and extraordinary progress. It was easy to see that he would one day raise himself to eminence. Whilst under my instruction, I discovered his early genius for poetic composition in the following manner. When the Greek class read the account that Herodotus gives of the battle of Marathon, the bravery of Miltiades and his ten thousand Greeks raised his patriotic feelings to enthusiasm, and drew from him expressions which I thought were embodied, a few days afterward, in some well-written verses in a Charleston paper, on that far-famed unequal but successful conflict against tyranny and oppression; and suspecting my talented

scholar to be the author, I went to his desk and asked him if he did not write them; and hesitating at first, rather blushing, he confessed he did. I then said: 'I knew you could do such things, and suppose you have some such pieces by you, which I should like to see. Do bring them to me.' He consented, and in a day or two brought me a number, which I read with pleasure and admiration at the strong marks of genius stamped on all, but here and there requiring, as I thought, a very slight amendment.

"I had hired a mathematician to teach both him and myself, (for I could not then teach that science,) and in this he also made such wonderful progress, that at the end of one year he entered the Junior Class in Charleston College triumphantly, while others who had been studying four years and more, were obliged to take the Sophomore Class. About the end of the year 1828, I left Charleston. After that he taught Mathematics for some time. His career afterwards has been one of heroic adventure, of hair-breadth escapes by flood and field, and of scientific explorations, which have made him world-wide renowned. In a letter I received from him very lately, he expresses his gratitude to me in the following words: 'I am very far from either forgetting you or neglecting you, or in any way losing the old regard I had for you. There is no time to which I go back with more pleasure

than that spent with you, for there was no time so thoroughly well spent; and of any thing I may have learned, I remember nothing so well, and so distinctly, as what I acquired with you.' Here I cannot help saying that the merit was almost all his own. It is true that I encouraged and cheered him on, but if the soil into which I put the seeds of learning had not been of the richest quality, they would never have sprung up to a hundred-fold in the full ear. Such, my young friends, is but an imperfect sketch of my once beloved and favorite pupil, now a senator, and who may yet rise to be at the head of this great and growing Republic. My prayer is that he may ever be opposed to war, injustice, and oppression of every kind, a blessing to his country and an example of every noble virtue to the whole world."

He was confirmed, in his seventeenth year, as a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in which communion he was brought up, and continues to this day. Immediately after leaving college, which was before the close of the academic term, he opened a school in Charleston. At such hours as he could command, he attended in other schools to instruct classes in mathematics; and, in addition to all these labors, took charge, for a considerable period, of an evening school. Persons who have been engaged in similar pursuits can appreciate how ex-

hausting such continuous labors must have been. So early did he develop the indefatigable energy and power of endurance that have marked his whole subsequent life. While engaged in these humble and persevering toils, for the support of his widowed mother and her family, his merits were brought into particular notice by the following circumstance:—

It became necessary, in the prosecution of a lawsuit, in which a certain rice-field in the neighborhood of Charleston was involved, to have it carefully and accurately surveyed. It was at the height of the sickly season, and the locality was so particularly dangerous from that cause, that difficulty was experienced in inducing surveyors to go upon it. The mathematical attainments of young Fremont happened to be brought to the knowledge of the party concerned. He promptly agreed to perform the service. The courage with which he engaged in the enterprise, and the scientific skill and clerical neatness with which he executed it, attracted the attention and admiration of so many persons of influence, that he was at once secure of employment and patronage.

Soon after this, he was engaged in the survey of the railroad leading from Charleston to Hamburg. About the beginning of the year 1833, the sloop of war Natchez arrived in Charleston, to enforce the proclamation of President Jack-

son. By the influence of Mr. Poinsett, afterwards Secretary of War, and others friendly to his family, young Fremont obtained the situation of teacher of mathematics and instructor of the midshipmen on board the *Natchez*, and sailed in her, in that capacity, to the Brazilian station. At the termination of her cruise, she returned to New York. After appearing before a board of examiners, in Baltimore, Mr. Fremont was regularly commissioned as a professor of mathematics in the navy, and assigned to the *Frigate Independence*. The distinguished manner in which he passed the examination coming to the ears of the Faculty of the College in Charleston, they instantly conferred upon him both the academic degrees, of Bachelor and Master of Arts.

An Act of Congress, passed on the 30th of April, 1824, authorized the President of the United States "to employ two or more skilful civil engineers, and such officers of the corps of engineers, or who may be detailed to do duty with that corps, as he may think proper, to cause the necessary surveys, plans, and estimates to be made of the routes of such roads and canals as he may deem of national importance, in a commercial or military point of view, or for the transportation of the public mail." Under this act, Mr. Fremont received his first appointment in that branch of the public service, where

so signal distinction and wide renown were in reserve for him. President Jackson selected him to be associated as a civil engineer with Captain Williams of the topographical corps of engineers,—an officer of distinguished merit, and who will ever be remembered as one of the heroes that fell at Monterey,—in making a survey, plans, and estimates of the route of the Charleston and Cincinnati Railroad. Resigning his commission in the navy, he repaired with alacrity to his chosen work. The portion of the route assigned him was the mountain regions of the Carolinas and Tennessee, and he there commenced those observations and explorations which have since extended over such immense regions. The winter of 1837 and 1838 was spent also under Captain Williams, in a survey of the Cherokee country, in conducting the field-work, and participating in preparing the military map which was the result of the expedition.

During the administration of Mr. Van Buren, an act was passed and approved by him on the 5th of July, 1838, to increase the military establishment. The fourth section required that the corps of topographical engineers should be organized and increased, by regular promotion in the same, so that the said corps should consist of one colonel, one lieutenant-colonel, four majors, ten captains, ten first lieutenants, and ten



second lieutenants; and the fifth section ordained that the vacancies created by said organization, over and above those which could be filled by the corps itself, should be taken from the army, and from such as it may be deemed advisable of the civil engineers employed under the act of the 30th of April, 1824.

This latter clause let in Mr. Fremont. It was probably designed to do so, as his friend and patron, Mr. Poinsett, was then Secretary of War. He was accordingly commissioned, two days afterwards, on the 7th of July, 1838, as a second lieutenant of the topographical engineers. About this time, he had been transferred to the theatre of his fame, the field where his great work in life was to be done.

A thorough exploration and survey of the vast region north of the Missouri, and west of the Mississippi, was deemed by the administration to have become necessary, and arrangements were made to accomplish it. Mr. Nicholet, a learned and distinguished astronomer, and man of science, a member of the French Academy, and a gentleman of great general accomplishments and worth, then residing in St. Louis, was appointed to conduct the service. He requested to have associated with him a younger person, to act as his assistant, with the requisite qualities of science, energy, courage, and enterprise. Mr. Poinsett offered the situation to

Lieutenant Fremont, who promptly and gladly accepted it. The years 1838 and 1839 were spent in this field, and the whole country was explored up to the British line. Mr. Fremont participated zealously in the work, and in making the map of that region, which was presented to the government by Mr. Nicholet. In the course of these surveys there were seventy thousand meteorological observations, and the topography was minutely determined by the proper calculations at innumerable points. The map thus constructed has been the source from which all subsequent ones relating to that region have been derived.

In the spring of 1841, Lieutenant Fremont went in command of a small party to survey the Desmoines River.

On the 19th of October, 1841, he was married, in the city of Washington, to Jessie, daughter of the Hon. Thomas H. Benton, a Senator in Congress from the State of Missouri. It is not at all strange that objections were made to the match. A second lieutenant,—in a corps where promotion is very slow, and having no other means of support than the unreasonably small pay allowed to subordinate officers in our army,—surely had nothing to recommend him, in the way of worldly goods or prospects. He had not then commenced his great career,—no world-wide lustre had begun to emblazon his



name,—no perilous adventures, on a broad theatre, had drawn out, to general view, his heroic qualities. But the instincts of a pure heart are often the truest wisdom; and he was preferred before all that fashion, wealth, and great station could offer.

All know the pride and fidelity with which Colonel Benton has, ever since that time, cherished the character of his son-in-law. Bereft of his own sons by early death, his heart has gathered its affections around Fremont. He has four daughters, all living, and all married. Mrs. Fremont is the second daughter, and was born in Virginia, at the family seat of her grandfather, Colonel McDowell, on the 31st May, 1824. All that it would be proper to say of her in this work, is all that could be said of any woman,—she is worthy of her origin, and of her lot.

We have now reached the point at which Mr. Fremont arrested that universal attention which has followed him ever since. His two first expeditions, on a large scale, will be related mostly in his own language, in consecutive extracts from his Reports published by Congress. The first Report was republished, together with the second, by an order of the Senate of the United States, passed March 3, 1845. These Reports at once established his reputation, as a scientific explorer and heroic adventurer, throughout the world. Large editions of them have been

reprinted by booksellers in this country, and also in England, and they have been noticed with the highest commendation in the various literary and scientific journals, at home and abroad. The Smithsonian Institution inserted among its publications a description of the plants collected by him, in California, prepared by John Torrey, F. L. S., with illustrative plates, entitled "*Plantæ Fremontianæ*." Nothing has contributed more to the honor of our country than the manner in which its gallant and enlightened officers have conducted various exploring expeditions, and prepared reports of them. A rich and interesting body of national literature has thus been accumulated. Fremont's Reports of his first and second expedition, at once gave him an European reputation, which has not yet been rivalled. When the Reports of the last three expeditions are given to the world, it will be found that his explorations cover more ground, and bring a larger contribution to geographical and other science, than can be claimed for any other man in our annals.

Of the literary style of these Reports, the reader will be able to judge from the following chapters.

## CHAPTER II.

FIRST EXPEDITION—PRAIRIES—FORT LARAMIE—  
SOUTH PASS—ROCKY MOUNTAINS—PLATTE OR  
NEBRASKA RIVER.

THE first expedition of Lieutenant Fremont, in command of an exploring party on a large scale, occupied the summer of 1842, and embraced the country between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains, along the line of the Kansas, and the Great Platte, or Nebraska, river. Having received his instructions from Colonel J. J. Abert, chief of the corps of topographical engineers, he left Washington City on the 2d of May, and arrived at St. Louis, by way of New York, on the 22d of that month, where he made the principal preparations for the service. Having ascended the Missouri in a steamboat, he proceeded to Choteau's Landing, on the right bank of the Kansas, about ten miles from its mouth, and six miles beyond the western boundary of Missouri. Here the final arrangements were completed, every requisite point provided

for, and the expedition organized into working order and shape.

The party, which had been collected in St. Louis, consisted principally of Creole and Canadian voyageurs, who had been trained to prairie life and wilderness adventures in the employ of fur companies in the Indian country, and consisted of twenty-two men. Besides them, there was Mr. Charles Preuss, a native of Germany; who had been thoroughly educated to sketch the topographical features of a country, and to whose extraordinary skill and enthusiasm, in the prosecution of the service assigned him, Col. Fremont has always borne the most affectionate and grateful testimony. Mr. L. Maxwell was engaged as a hunter, and Christopher Carson, celebrated the world over for his genius and exploits as a mountaineer, and everywhere known as Kit Carson, was the guide of the expedition. Henry Brant, a son of Col. J. H. Brant, of St. Louis, nineteen years of age, and Randolph, a son of Col. Benton, twelve years of age, also accompanied it. The latter, of course, was especially under the charge of Mr. Fremont. Such an experience, it was thought, would be favorable to his physical and mental development; and it may well be supposed that an interesting lad of that age would be a source of amusement and an object of attachment to men, whose mode of life had given them but little opportunity to enjoy the society

of such a companion. Randolph was undoubtedly the pet and the pride of the party. Eight men conducted as many carts, which contained stores, baggage, and instruments, and were each drawn by two mules. All the rest were well armed and mounted. A few extra horses, and four oxen, as an addition to the stock of provisions, completed the train. It started on the morning of Friday, the 10th of June. Mr. Cho-teau accompanied the party until they met an Indian, whom he had engaged to conduct them some forty miles, thus giving them a fair start.

It will be well, before entering upon a detail of the adventures of the expedition in its route, to describe the general regulations and ordinary arrangements, in travel and in camp, from day to day.

“During our journey, it was the customary practice to encamp an hour or two before sunset, when the carts were disposed so as to form a sort of barricade around a circle some eighty yards in diameter. The tents were pitched, and the horses hobbled and turned loose to graze; and but a few minutes elapsed before the cooks of the messes, of which there were four, were busily engaged in preparing the evening meal. At nightfall the horses, mules, and oxen were driven in, and picketed—that is, secured by a halter, of which one end was tied to a small steel-shod picket, and driven into the ground; the halter

being twenty or thirty feet long, which enabled them to obtain a little food during the night. When we had reached a part of the country where such a precaution became necessary, the carts being regularly arranged for defending the camp, guard was mounted at eight o'clock, consisting of three men, who were relieved every two hours; the morning watch being horse guard for the day. At daybreak the camp was roused, the animals turned loose to graze, and breakfast generally over between six and seven o'clock, when we resumed our march, making regularly a halt at noon for one or two hours. Such was usually the order of the day, except when accident of country forced a variation; which, however, happened but rarely."

The party was now fairly afloat on the boundless ocean of prairie, the Indian guide had left, and the excitements and perils of the service began.

"We reached the ford of the Kansas late in the afternoon of the 14th, where the river was two hundred and thirty yards wide, and commenced immediately preparations for crossing. I had expected to find the river fordable; but it had been swollen by the late rains, and was sweeping by with an angry current, yellow and turbid as the Missouri. Up to this point, the road we had travelled was a remarkably fine one, well beaten, and level—the usual road of a



prairie country. By our route, the ford was one hundred miles from the mouth of the Kansas River. Several mounted men led the way into the stream, to swim across. The animals were driven in after them, and in a few minutes all had reached the opposite bank in safety, with the exception of the oxen, which swam some distance down the river, and, returning to the right bank, were not got over until the next morning. In the mean time, the carts had been unloaded and dismantled, and an India-rubber boat, which I had brought with me for the survey of the Platte River, placed in the water. The boat was twenty feet long, and five broad, and on it were placed the body and wheels of a cart, with the load belonging to it, and three men with paddles.

“ The velocity of the current, and the inconvenient freight, rendering it difficult to be managed, Basil Lajeunesse, one of our best swimmers, took in his teeth a line attached to the boat, and swam ahead in order to reach a footing as soon as possible, and assist in drawing her over. In this manner, six passages had been successfully made, and as many carts with their contents, and a greater portion of the party deposited on the left bank; but night was drawing near, and, in our anxiety to have all over before the darkness closed in, I put upon the boat the remaining two carts, with their accompanying load. The man at the helm was timid on water, and, in his alarm,

capsized the boat. Carts, barrels, boxes, and bales, were in a moment floating down the current; but all the men who were on the shore jumped into the water, without stopping to think if they could swim, and almost everything—even heavy articles, such as guns and lead—was recovered.

“Two of the men, who could not swim, came nigh being drowned, and all the sugar belonging to one of the messes wasted its sweets on the muddy waters; but our heaviest loss was a bag of coffee, which contained nearly all our provision. It was a loss which none but a traveller in a strange and inhospitable country can appreciate; and often afterward, when excessive toil and long marching had overcome us with fatigue and weariness, we remembered and mourned over our loss in the Kansas. Carson and Maxwell had been much in the water yesterday, and both, in consequence, were taken ill.”

The various aspects and incidents of prairie scenery and life are presented with great felicity of description. The following passages will be read with interest. They had met a party of trappers belonging to the American Fur Company:—

“We laughed then at their forlorn and vagabond appearance, and in our turn, a month or two afterward, furnished the same occasion for merriment to others. Even their stock of tobac-



co, that *sine qua non* of a voyageur, without which the night fire is gloomy, was entirely exhausted. However, we shortened their homeward journey by a small supply of our own provision. They gave us the welcome intelligence that the buffalo were abundant some two days' march in advance, and made us a present of some choice pieces, which were a very acceptable change from our salt pork. In the interchange of news, and the renewal of old acquaintanceships, we found wherewithal to fill a busy hour; then we mounted our horses, and they shouldered their packs, and we shook hands and parted. Among them, I had found an old companion on the northern prairie, a hardened and hardly served veteran of the mountains, who had been as much hacked and scarred as an old *moustache* of Napoleon's "old guard." He flourished in the sobriquet of La Tulipe, and his real name I never knew. Finding that he was going to the States only because his company was bound in that direction, and that he was rather more willing to return with me, I took him again into my service."

La Tulipe, so graphically described by Fremont in the foregoing extract, belongs to a class of men who add much to the romantic interest of the great interior wilds of our continent. The sailors of the prairie, their only home is on those mighty wastes, their life is spent in

wandering from point to point, their eyes delight in the boundless landscape, their hearts in scenes of peril and adventure. They are as completely severed from the ties of locality, and the restraints of ordinary life, as the sailor; they are as familiar with physical suffering, and with exposure to storm and death, as free from care, and as brave, generous, and noble-hearted.

“At our evening camp, about sunset, three figures were discovered approaching, which our glasses made out to be Indians. They proved to be Cheyennes—two men, and a boy of thirteen. About a month since, they had left their people on the south fork of the river, some three hundred miles to the westward, and a party of only four in number had been to the Pawnee villages on a horse-stealing excursion, from which they were returning unsuccessful. They were miserably mounted on wild horses from the Arkansas plains, and had no other weapons than bows and long spears; and had they been discovered by the Pawnees, could not, by any possibility, have escaped. They were mortified by their ill success, and said the Pawnees were cowards, who shut up their horses in their lodges at night. I invited them to supper with me, and Randolph and the young Cheyenne, who had been eyeing each other suspiciously and curiously, soon became intimate friends.

“A few miles brought us into the midst of the





buffalo, swarming in immense numbers over the plains, where they had left scarcely a blade of grass standing. Mr. Preuss, who was sketching at a little distance in the rear, had at first noted them as large groves of timber. In the sight of such a mass of life, the traveller feels a strange emotion of grandeur. We had heard from a distance a dull and confused murmuring, and, when we came in view of their dark masses, there was not one among us who did not feel his heart beat quicker. It was the early part of the day, when the herds are feeding; and everywhere they were in motion. Here and there a huge old bull was rolling in the grass, and clouds of dust rose in the air from various parts of the bands, each the scene of some obstinate fight. Indians and buffalo make the poetry and life of the prairie, and our camp was full of their exhilaration. In place of the quiet monotony of the march, relieved only by the cracking of the whip, and an '*avance donc ! enfant de garce !*' shouts and songs resounded from every part of the line, and our evening camp was always the commencement of a feast, which terminated only with our departure on the following morning. At any time of the night might be seen pieces of the most delicate and choicest meat, roasting *en appolas*, on sticks around the fire, and the guard were never without company. With pleasant weather and no enemy to fear, and abundance of the most

excellent meat, and no scarcity of bread or tobacco, they were enjoying the oasis of a voyageur's life. Three cows were killed to-day. Kit Carson had shot one, and was continuing the chase in the midst of another herd, when his horse fell headlong, but sprang up and joined the flying band. Though considerably hurt, he had the good fortune to break no bones; and Maxwell, who was mounted on a fleet hunter, captured the runaway after a hard chase. He was on the point of shooting him, to avoid the loss of his bridle, (a handsomely mounted Spanish one,) when he found that his horse was able to come up with him. Animals are frequently lost in this way; and it is necessary to keep close watch over them, in the vicinity of the buffalo, in the midst of which they scour off to the plains, and are rarely retaken. One of our mules took a sudden freak into his head, and joined a neighboring band to-day. As we were not in a condition to lose horses, I sent several men in pursuit, and remained in camp, in the hope of recovering him; but lost the afternoon to no purpose, as we did not see him again. Astronomical observations placed us in longitude  $100^{\circ} 05' 47''$ , latitude  $40^{\circ} 49' 55''$ .

"*July 1.* As we were riding quietly along the bank, a grand herd of buffalo, some seven or eight hundred in number, came crowding up from the river, where they had been to drink, and com-



menced crossing the plain slowly, eating as they went. The wind was favorable; the coolness of the morning invited to exercise; the ground was apparently good, and the distance across the prairie (two or three miles) gave us a fine opportunity to charge them before they could get among the river hills. It was too fine a prospect for a chase to be lost; and, halting for a few moments, the hunters were brought up and saddled, and Kit Carson, Maxwell, and I started together. They were now somewhat less than half a mile distant, and we rode easily along until within about three hundred yards, when a sudden agitation, a wavering in the band, and a galloping to and fro of some which were scattered along the skirts, gave us the intimation that we were discovered. We started together at a hand gallop, riding steadily abreast of each other, and here the interest of the chase became so engrossingly intense, that we were sensible to nothing else. We were now closing upon them rapidly, and the front of the mass was already in rapid motion for the hills, and in a few seconds the movement had communicated itself to the whole herd.

“A crowd of bulls, as usual, brought up the rear, and every now and then some of them faced about, and then dashed on after the band a short distance, and turned and looked again, as if more than half inclined to stand and fight.

In a few moments, however, during which we had been quickening our pace, the rout was universal, and we were going over the ground like a hurricane. When at about thirty yards, we gave the usual shout, (the hunter's battle-cry,) and broke into the herd. We entered on the side, the mass giving way in every direction in their heedless course. Many of the bulls, less active and less fleet than the cows, paying no attention to the ground, and occupied solely with the hunter, were precipitated to the earth with great force, rolling over and over with the violence of the shock, and hardly distinguishable in the dust. We separated on entering, each singling out his game.

"My horse was a trained hunter, famous in the west under the name of Proveau, and, with his eyes flashing, and the foam flying from his mouth, sprang on after the cow like a tiger. In a few moments he brought me alongside of her, and, rising in the stirrups, I fired at the distance of a yard, the ball entering at the termination of the long hair, and passing near the heart. She fell headlong at the report of the gun, and checking my horse, I looked around for my companions. At a little distance, Kit was on the ground, engaged in tying his horse to the horns of a cow which he was preparing to cut up. Among the scattered bands, at some distance below, I caught a glimpse of Maxwell; and



while I was looking, a light wreath of white smoke curled away from his gun, from which I was too far to hear the report. Nearer, and between me and the hills, towards which they were directing their course, was the body of the herd, and giving my horse the rein, we dashed after them. A thick cloud of dust hung upon their rear, which filled my mouth and eyes, and nearly smothered me. In the midst of this I could see nothing, and the buffalo were not distinguishable until within thirty feet. They crowded together more densely still as I came upon them, and rushed along in such a compact body, that I could not obtain an entrance,—the horse almost leaping upon them. In a few moments the mass divided to the right and left, the horns clattering with a noise heard above every thing else, and my horse darted into the opening. Five or six bulls charged on us as we dashed along the line, but were left far behind, and singling out a cow, I gave her my fire, but struck too high. She gave a tremendous leap, and scoured on swifter than before. I reined up my horse, and the band swept on like a torrent, and left the place quiet and clear. Our chase had led us into dangerous ground. A prairie-dog village, so thickly settled that there were three or four holes in every twenty yards square, occupied the whole bottom for nearly two miles in length. Looking

around, I saw only one of the hunters, nearly out of sight, and the long dark line of our caravan crawling along, three or four miles distant."

The expedition had now reached the heart of the prairie country, and the report contains graphic descriptions of the scenery and general features of the landscape. The botanical richness of these vast plains is one of their most striking attractions.

"Along our route the *amorpha* has been in very abundant but variable bloom—in some places, bending beneath the weight of purple clusters; in others, without a flower. It seems to love best the sunny slopes, with a dark soil and southern exposure. Everywhere the rose is met with, and reminds us of cultivated gardens and civilization. It is scattered over the prairies in small bouquets, and, when glittering in the dews and waving in the pleasant breeze of the early morning, is the most beautiful of the prairie flowers. The *artemisia*, absinthe, or prairie sage, as it is variously called, is increasing in size, and glitters like silver, as the southern breeze turns up its leaves to the sun. All these plants have their insect inhabitants, variously colored; taking generally the hue of the flower on which they live. The *artemisia* has its small fly accompanying it through every change of elevation and latitude; and wherever I have seen the *asclepias tuberosa*, I have always remarked, too, on the

flower a large butterfly, so nearly resembling it in color, as to be distinguishable at a little distance only by the motion of its wings."

As they approached the regions where danger from Indian hostility was to be apprehended, the men were practised, during the noon and evening halts, at target-shooting, and increased vigilance was exercised by the guards.

"We had travelled thirty-one miles. A heavy bank of black clouds in the west came on us in a storm between nine and ten, preceded by a violent wind. The rain fell in such torrents that it was difficult to breathe facing the wind, the thunder rolled incessantly, and the whole sky was tremulous with lightning; now and then illuminated by a blinding flash, succeeded by pitchy darkness. Carson had the watch from ten to midnight, and to him had been assigned our young *compagnons de voyage*, Messrs. Brant and R. Benton. This was their first night on guard, and such an introduction did not augur very auspiciously of the pleasures of the expedition. Many things conspired to render their situation uncomfortable; stories of desperate and bloody Indian fights were rife in the camp; our position was badly chosen, surrounded on all sides by timbered hollows, and occupying an area of several hundred feet, so that necessarily the guards were far apart; and now and then I could hear Randolph, as if relieved by the sound of a voice

in the darkness, calling out to the sergeant of the guard, to direct his attention to some imaginary alarm; but they stood it out, and took their turn regularly afterward."

The incidents of camp and prairie life are pleasantly told in the following passages: —

"*July 4.* The morning was very smoky, the sun shining dimly and red, as in a thick fog. The camp was roused with a salute at daybreak. While we were at breakfast, a buffalo calf broke through the camp, followed by a couple of wolves. In its fright, it had probably mistaken us for a band of buffalo. The wolves were obliged to make a circuit around the camp, so that the calf got a little the start, and strained every nerve to reach a large herd at the foot of the hills, about two miles distant; but first one, and then another, and another wolf joined in the chase, until his pursuers amounted to twenty or thirty, and they ran him down before he could reach his friends. There were a few bulls near the place, and one of them attacked the wolves, and tried to rescue him; but was driven off immediately, and the little animal fell an easy prey, half devoured before he was dead. We watched the chase with the interest always felt for the weak; and had there been a saddled horse at hand, he would have fared better.

"As we were riding slowly along this afternoon, clouds of dust in the ravines, among the

hills to the right, suddenly attracted our attention, and in a few minutes column after column of buffalo came galloping down, making directly to the river. By the time the leading herds had reached the water, the prairie was darkened with the dense masses. Immediately before us, when the bands first came down into the valley, stretched an unbroken line, the head of which was lost among the river hills on the opposite side; and still they poured down from the ridge on our right. From hill to hill, the prairie bottom was certainly not less than two miles wide; and allowing the animals to be ten feet apart, and only ten in a line, there were already eleven thousand in view. Some idea may thus be formed of their number when they had occupied the whole plain. In a short time they surrounded us on every side; extending for several miles in the rear, and forward as far as the eye could reach; leaving around us, as we advanced, an open space of only two or three hundred yards. This movement of the buffalo indicated to us the presence of Indians on the North fork.

“ I halted earlier than usual, about forty miles from the junction, and all hands were soon busily engaged in preparing a feast to celebrate the day. The kindness of our friends at St. Louis had provided us with a large supply of excellent preserves and rich fruit-cake; and when these were added to a macaroni soup, and variously prepared

dishes of the choicest buffalo meat, crowned with a cup of coffee, and enjoyed with prairie appetite, we felt, as we sat in barbaric luxury around our smoking supper on the grass, a greater sensation of enjoyment than the Roman epicure at his perfumed feast. But most of all it seemed to please our Indian friends, who, in the unrestrained enjoyment of the moment, demanded to know if our "medicine days came often."

The route of the expedition had been along the southern side of the Kansas about one hundred miles, then across that river; after continuing some time near its northern side, across the country to Grand Island, in the Platte, then along the course of that river to the junction of its north and south forks, and then up the south fork.

At the distance of about forty miles from the junction, on the 5th of July, Mr. Fremont divided his party. With Mr. Preuss, Maxwell, Bernier, Ayot, and Basil Lajeunesse, he continued up the course of the south fork, taking with him the Cheyennes, as their home was in that direction. The residue of the party was placed under the command of Clement Lambert, who was directed to cross over to the north fork, and at some convenient place, make a *cache* of everything not absolutely necessary to the further progress of the expedition. It is the custom of parties travelling far into the wilderness, at points which they expect to pass again on their route, to con-



ceal, by burying, or in any way covering, so as to protect and preserve them, such articles as may be dispensed with in the mean time. These places of hidden deposit are called *caches*. After attending to this, Lambert was instructed to make his way to the American company's fort at the mouth of Laramie's Fork, and there wait the arrival of Fremont, who designed to reach the fort in season to observe certain occultations that were to take place on the nights of the 16th and 17th of July.

"*July 5.* Before breakfast all was ready. We had one led horse in addition to those we rode, and a pack mule, destined to carry our instruments, provisions, and baggage; the last two articles not being of very great weight. The instruments consisted of a sextant, artificial horizon, &c., a barometer, spy-glass, and compass. The chronometer I of course kept on my person. I had ordered the cook to put up for us some flour, coffee, and sugar, and our rifles were to furnish the rest. One blanket, in addition to his saddle and saddle blanket, furnished the materials for each man's bed, and every one was provided with a change of linen. All were armed with rifles or double-barrelled guns; and, in addition to these, Maxwell and myself were furnished with excellent pistols. Thus accoutred, we took a parting breakfast with our friends, and set forth.

“ Our journey the first day afforded nothing of any interest. We shot a buffalo toward sunset, and, having obtained some meat for our evening meal, encamped where a little timber afforded us the means of making a fire. Having disposed our meat on roasting sticks, we proceeded to unpack our bales in search of coffee and sugar, and flour for bread. With the exception of a little parched coffee, unground, we found nothing. Our cook had neglected to put it up, or it had been somehow forgotten. Tired and hungry, with tough bull meat without salt, (for we had not been able to kill a cow,) and a little bitter coffee, we sat down in silence to our miserable fare, a very disconsolate party; for yesterday's feast was yet fresh in our memories, and this was our first brush with misfortune. Each man took his blanket, and laid himself down silently. To-day we had travelled about thirty-six miles.

“ *July 6.* Finding that our present excursion would be attended with considerable hardship, and unwilling to expose more persons than necessary, I determined to send Mr. Preuss back to the party. His horse, too, appeared in no condition to support the journey; and accordingly, after breakfast, he took the road across the hills, attended by one of our most trusty men, Bernier. The ridge between the rivers is here about fifteen miles broad, and I expected he would probably



strike the fork near their evening camp. At all events, he would not fail to find their trail, and rejoin them the next day."

After his people had composed themselves for the night, and silence and slumber had fallen upon the camp, it was the invariable practice of the commander, when the condition of the atmosphere, the state of the weather, and the aspect of the heavens allowed, to get out his instruments, take astronomical observations, and determine and record the latitude and longitude.

"My companions slept rolled up in their blankets, and the Indians lay in the grass near the fire; but my sleeping-place generally had an air of more pretension. Our rifles were tied together near the muzzle, the butts resting on the ground, and a knife laid on the rope, to cut away in case of an alarm. Over this, which made a kind of frame, was thrown a large India rubber cloth, which we used to cover our packs. This made a tent sufficiently large to receive about half of my bed, and was a place of shelter for my instruments; and as I was careful always to put this part against the wind, I could lie here with a sensation of satisfied enjoyment, and hear the wind blow, and the rain patter close to my head, and know that I should be at least half dry. Certainly, I never slept more soundly. The barometer at sunset was 26.010, thermometer 81°, and cloudy; but

a gale from the west sprang up with the setting sun, and in a few minutes swept away every cloud from the sky. The evening was very fine, and I remained up to take some astronomical observations."

The following passage brings the incidents of wild prairie life, and some traits and aspects of Indian character and habits, vividly before the mind.

"There were some dark-looking objects among the hills, about two miles to the left, here low and undulating, which we had seen for a little time, and supposed to be buffalo coming in to water; but, happening to look behind, Maxwell saw the Cheyennes whipping up furiously, and another glance at the dark objects showed them at once to be Indians coming up at speed.

"Had we been well mounted, and disencumbered of instruments, we might have set them at defiance; but as it was, we were fairly caught. It was too late to rejoin our friends, and we endeavored to gain a clump of timber about half a mile ahead; but the instruments and the tired state of our horses did not allow us to go faster than a steady canter, and they were gaining on us fast. At first they did not appear to be more than fifteen or twenty in number, but group after group darted into view at the top of the hills, until all the little eminences seemed in motion, and, in a few minutes

from the time they were first discovered, two or three hundred, naked to the breech-cloth, were sweeping across the prairie. In a few hundred yards we discovered that the timber we were endeavoring to make was on the opposite side of the river; and before we could reach the bank, down came the Indians upon us.

“I am inclined to think that in a few seconds more the leading man, and, perhaps, some of his companions, would have rolled in the dust; for we had jerked the covers from our guns, and our fingers were on the triggers; men in such cases generally act from instinct, and a charge from three hundred naked savages is a circumstance not well calculated to promote a cool exercise of judgment. Just as he was about to fire, Maxwell recognized the leading Indian, and shouted to him in the Indian language: ‘You’re a fool; don’t you know me?’ The sound of his own language seemed to shock the savage, and, swerving his horse a little, he passed us like an arrow. He wheeled, as I rode out toward him, and gave me his hand, striking his breast and exclaiming ‘Arapahó!’ They proved to be a village of that nation among whom Maxwell had resided as a trader a year or two previously, and recognized him accordingly. We were soon in the midst of the band, answering as well as we could a multitude of questions; of which the very first

was, of what tribe were our Indian companions who were coming in the rear? They seemed disappointed to know that they were Cheyennes, for they had fully anticipated a grand dance around a Pawnee scalp that night."

The party ascended the South Fork, arriving, late in the evening of the 10th, at St. Vrain's Fort, which is at the foot of the mountains, about seventeen miles from Long's Peak. On the morning of the 12th, it started across the country in the direction of Fort Laramie, which was reached by the evening of the 15th. They passed on the way some of those wonderful natural formations, which the face of the rocks and outlines of the mountains often present in the interior of the continent.

"The hill on the western side imitates, in an extraordinary manner, a massive fortified place, with a remarkable fulness of detail. The rock is marl and earthy limestone, white, without the least appearance of vegetation, and much resembles masonry at a little distance; and here it sweeps around a level area two or three hundred yards in diameter, and in the form of a half-moon, terminating on either extremity in enormous bastions. Along the whole line of the parapets appear domes and slender minarets, forty or fifty feet high, giving it every appearance of an old fortified town. On the waters of White River, where this formation

exists in great extent, it presents appearances which excite the admiration of the solitary voyageur, and form a frequent theme of their conversation when speaking of the wonders of the country. Sometimes it offers the perfectly illusive appearance of a large city, with numerous streets and magnificent buildings, among which the Canadians never fail to see their *cabaret*; and sometimes it takes the form of a solitary house, with many large chambers, into which they drive their horses at night, and sleep in these natural defences perfectly secure from any attack of prowling savages. Before reaching our camp at Goshen's Hole, in crossing the immense detritus at the foot of the Castle Rock, we were involved amidst winding passages cut by the waters of the hill; and where, with a breadth scarcely large enough for the passage of a horse, the walls rise thirty and forty feet perpendicularly. This formation supplies the discoloration of the Platte."

Upon reaching Fort Laramie, Fremont found the residue of his party there. They had arrived on the evening of the 13th. Mr. Preuss, with his companion Bernier, had intercepted them at the expected point. Some extracts from Preuss's journal will be read with interest, and prepare the mind to appreciate the energy and decision of character of Fremont, and the heroic fidelity of those of his followers who resolved to

share with him the now imminent dangers and increasing hardships of the enterprise.

It seems that after leaving Fremont, on the 6th of July, Preuss and Bernier reached the north fork of the Platte, in about six hours. There was no sign that Lambert's party had passed. Bernier rode down along the river to find them, leaving Preuss, who was too much exhausted to accompany him. The night approached and Bernier did not return. Of course there is always more or less danger in those vast unknown regions when parties get separated and out of sight, and where all are liable to be suddenly cut off, of not meeting again. Preuss describes his situation and feelings on the occasion:—

“The sun went down; he did not come. Uneasy I did not feel, but very hungry; I had no provisions, but I could make a fire; and, as I espied two doves in a tree, I tried to kill one; but it needs a better marksman than myself to kill a little bird with a rifle. I made a large fire, however, lighted my pipe—this true friend of mine in every emergency—lay down and let my thoughts wander to the far east. It was not many minutes after when I heard the tramp of a horse, and my faithful companion was by my side. He had found the party, who had been delayed by making their *cache*, about seven miles below. To the good supper which he



brought with him I did ample justice. He had forgotten salt, and I tried the soldier's substitute in time of war, and used gunpowder; but it answered badly—bitter enough, but no flavor of kitchen salt. I slept well; and was only disturbed by two owls, which were attracted by the fire, and took their place in the tree under which we slept. Their music seemed as disagreeable to my companion as to myself; he fired his rifle twice, and then they let us alone.”

Under date of July 8, Preuss relates as follows:—

“Our road to-day was a solitary one. No game made its appearance—not even a buffalo or a stray antelope; and nothing occurred to break the monotony until about five o'clock, when the caravan made a sudden halt. There was a galloping in of scouts and horsemen from every side—a hurrying to and fro in noisy confusion; rifles were taken from their cover; bullet pouches examined; in short, there was the cry of ‘Indians’ heard again. I had become so much accustomed to these alarms, that now they made but little impression on me; and before I had time to become excited, the new-comers were ascertained to be whites. It was a large party of traders and trappers, conducted by Mr. Bridger, a man well known in the history of the country. As the sun was low, and there was a fine grass patch not far ahead, they turned back

and encamped for the night with us. Mr. Bridger was invited to supper; and we listened with eager interest to an account of their adventures. What they had met, we would be likely to encounter; the chances which had befallen them, would probably happen to us; we looked upon their life as a picture of our own. He informed us that the condition of the country had become exceedingly dangerous. The Sioux, who had been badly disposed, had broken out into open hostility, and in the preceding autumn his party had encountered them in a severe engagement, in which a number of lives had been lost on both sides. United with the Cheyenne and Gros Ventre Indians, they were scouring the upper country in war parties of great force, and were at this time in the neighborhood of the *Red Buttes*, a famous landmark, which was directly on our path. They had declared war upon every living thing which should be found westward of that point, though their main object was to attack a large camp of whites and Snake Indians, who had a rendezvous in the Sweetwater valley. Availing himself of his intimate knowledge of the country, he had reached Laramie by an unusual route through the Black Hills, and avoided coming into contact with any of the scattered parties. This gentleman offered his services to accompany us so far as the head of the Sweetwater; but the absence of our



leader, which was deeply regretted by us all, rendered it impossible for us to enter upon such arrangement. In a camp consisting of men whose lives had been spent in this country, I expected to find every one prepared for occurrences of this nature; but, to my great surprise, I found, on the contrary, that this news had thrown them all into the greatest consternation, and on every side I heard only one exclamation, '*Il n'y aura pas de vie pour nous,*'—'There will be no more life for us,' 'our days are numbered.' All the night, scattered groups were assembled around the fires, smoking their pipes, and listening with the greatest eagerness to exaggerated details of Indian hostilities; and in the morning I found the camp dispirited, and agitated by a variety of conflicting opinions. A majority of the people were strongly disposed to return; but Clement Lambert, with some five or six others, professed their determination to follow Mr. Fremont to the uttermost limit of his journey. The others yielded to their remonstrances, and, somewhat ashamed of their cowardice, concluded to advance at least so far as Laramie Fork, eastward of which they were aware no danger was to be apprehended."

Upon Fremont's reaching the fort, a variety of circumstances, related to him by Mr. Boudeau, the gentleman in charge of that station—corroborated by the testimony of all who had means of

knowledge—confirmed the alarming statements made by Mr. Bridger. Extracts from Fremont's Journal will enable the reader to realize the pressure made upon him at Fort Laramie to prevent the further prosecution of his journey :—

“ Thus it would appear that the country was swarming with scattered war parties ; and when I heard, during the day, the various contradictory and exaggerated rumors which were incessantly repeated to them, I was not surprised that so much alarm prevailed among my men. Carson, one of the best and most experienced mountaineers, fully supported the opinion given by Bridger of the dangerous state of the country, and openly expressed his conviction that we could not escape without some sharp encounters with the Indians. In addition to this, he made his will ; and among the circumstances which were constantly occurring to increase their alarm, this was the most unfortunate ; and I found that a number of my party had become so much intimidated, that they had requested to be discharged at this place.

“ So far as frequent interruption from the Indians would allow, we occupied ourselves in making some astronomical calculations, and bringing up the general map to this stage of our journey ; but the tent was generally occupied by a succession of our ceremonious visitors. Some came for presents, and others for information of

our object in coming to the country; now and then, one would dart up to the tent on horseback, jerk off his trappings and stand silent at the door, holding his horse by the halter, signifying his desire to trade; occasionally, a savage would stalk in with an invitation to a feast of honor, a dog feast, and deliberately sit down and wait quietly until I was ready to accompany him. I went to one; the women and children were sitting outside the lodge, and we took our seats on buffalo robes spread around. The dog was in a large pot over the fire, in the middle of the lodge, and immediately on our arrival was dished up in large wooden bowls, one of which was handed to each. The flesh appeared very glutinous, with something of the flavor and appearance of mutton. Feeling something move behind me, I looked round and found that I had taken my seat among a litter of fat young puppies. Had I been nice in such matters the prejudices of civilization might have interfered with my tranquillity; but, fortunately, I am not of delicate nerves, and continued quietly to empty my platter.

“During our stay here, the men had been engaged in making numerous repairs, arranging pack-saddles, and otherwise preparing for the chances of a rough road and mountain travel. All things of this nature being ready, I gathered them around me in the evening, and told them

that 'I had determined to proceed the next day. They were all well armed. I had engaged the services of Mr. Bissonette as interpreter, and had taken, in the circumstances, every possible means to insure our safety. In the rumors we had heard, I believed there was much exaggeration; and then, they were men accustomed to this kind of life and to the country; and that these were the dangers of every day occurrence, and to be expected in the ordinary course of their service. They had heard of the unsettled condition of the country before leaving St. Louis, and therefore could not make it a reason for breaking their engagements. Still, I was unwilling to take with me, on a service of some certain danger, men on whom I could not rely; and as I had understood that there were among them some who were disposed to cowardice, and anxious to return, they had but to come forward at once, and state their desire, and they would be discharged with the amount due to them for the time they had served.' To their honor be it said, there was but one among them who had the face to come forward and avail himself of the permission. I did not think that the situation of the country justified me in taking our young companions, Messrs. Brant and Benton, along with us. In case of misfortune, it would have been thought, at the least, an act of great imprudence; and therefore, though reluctantly,

I determined to leave them. Randolph had been the life of the camp, and the *petit garçon*, was much regretted by the men, to whom his buoyant spirits had afforded great amusement. They all, however, agreed in the propriety of leaving him at the fort, because, as they said, he might cost the lives of some of the men in a fight with the Indians.

“We were ready to depart; the tents were struck, the mules geared up, and our horses saddled, and we walked up to the fort to take the *stirrup-cup* with our friends in an excellent home-brewed preparation. While thus pleasantly engaged, seated in one of the little cool chambers, at the door of which a man had been stationed to prevent all intrusion from the Indians, a number of chiefs, several of them powerful fine-looking men, forced their way into the room in spite of all opposition. Handing me the following letter, they took their seats in silence:—

‘FORT PLATTE, July 1, 1842.

‘MR. FREMONT: The chiefs having assembled in council, have just told me to warn you not to set out before the party of young men which is now out shall have returned. Furthermore, they tell me that they are very sure they will fire upon you as soon as they meet you. They are expected back in seven or eight days. Excuse me for making these observations, but it seems

my duty to warn you of danger. Moreover, the chiefs who prohibit your setting out before the return of the warriors are the bearers of this note.

‘I am your obedient servant,

‘JOSEPH BISSONETTE,

‘By L. B. CHARTRAIN.

‘*Names of some of the chiefs.* The Otter Hat, the Breaker of Arrows, the Black Night, the Bull’s Tail.’

“After reading this, I mentioned its purport to my companions; and, seeing that all were fully possessed of its contents, one of the Indians rose up, and having first shaken hands with me, spoke as follows:—

‘You have come among us at a bad time. Some of our people have been killed, and our young men, who are gone to the mountains, are eager to avenge the blood of their relations, which has been shed by the whites. Our young men are bad, and, if they meet you, they will believe that you are carrying goods and ammunition to their enemies, and will fire upon you. You have told us that this will make war. We know that our great father has many soldiers and big guns, and we are anxious to have our lives. We love the whites, and are desirous of peace. Thinking of all these things, we have determined to keep you here until our warriors



return. We are glad to see you among us. Our father is rich, and we expected that you would have brought presents to us—horses, and guns, and blankets. But we are glad to see you. We look upon your coming as the light which goes before the sun ; for you will tell our great father that you have seen us, and that we are naked and poor, and have nothing to eat ; and he will send us all these things.’ He was followed by the others to the same effect.

“ The observations of the savage appeared reasonable ; but I was aware that they had in view only the present object of detaining me, and were unwilling I should go further into the country. In reply, I asked them, through the interpretation of Mr. Boudeau, to select two or three of their number to accompany us until we should meet their people—they should spread their robes in my tent and eat at my table, and on our return I would give them presents in reward of their services. They declined, saying that there were no young men left in the village, and that they were too old to travel so many days on horseback, and preferred now to smoke their pipes in the lodge, and let the warriors go on the war-path. Besides, they had no power over the young men, and were afraid to interfere with them. In my turn I addressed them : ‘ You say that you love the whites ; why have you killed so many already this spring ? You



say that you love the whites, and are full of many expressions of friendship to us; but you are not willing to undergo the fatigue of a few days' ride to save our lives. We do not believe what you have said, and will not listen to you. Whatever a chief among us tells his soldiers to do, is done. We are the soldiers of the great chief, your father. He has told us to come here and see this country, and all the Indians, his children. Why should we not go? Before we came, we heard that you had killed his people, and ceased to be his children; but we came among you peaceably, holding out our hands. Now we find that the stories we heard are not lies, and that you are no longer his friends and children. *We have thrown away our bodies, and will not turn back.* When you told us that your young men would kill us, you did not know that our hearts were strong, and you did not see the rifles which my young men carry in their hands. We are few, and you are many, and may kill us all; but there will be much crying in your villages, for many of your young men will stay behind, and forget to return with your warriors from the mountains. Do you think that our great chief will let his soldiers die, and forget to cover their graves? Before the snows melt again, his warriors will sweep away your villages as the fire does the prairie in the autumn. See! I have pulled down my *white houses*, and my



Fremont's Speech to the Indians at Fort Laramie.



people are ready; when the sun is ten paces higher, we shall be on the march. If you have any thing to tell us, you will say it soon.' I broke up the conference, as I could do nothing with these people; and, being resolved to proceed, nothing was to be gained by delay. Accompanied by our hospitable friends, we returned to the camp. We had mounted our horses, and our parting salutations had been exchanged, when one of the chiefs (the Bull's Tail) arrived to tell me that they had determined to send a young man with us; and if I would point out the place of our evening camp, he should join us there. 'The young man is poor,' said he; 'he has no horse, and expects you to give him one.' I described to him the place where I intended to encamp, and, shaking hands, in a few minutes we were among the hills, and this last habitation of whites shut out from our view."

The intrepid resolution evinced by Fremont on this occasion is truly remarkable. He was a young man, and life had charms and ties as strong as ever could have appealed, in any heart, to the motives of self-preservation. A fond wife, and a dependent and devoted mother, were anxiously awaiting his safe return. There was ample justification, had he concluded to return. Indians, traders, hunters, his own people, even the stoutest of them all, conspired with one voice to implore him not to expose him and them to

what they regarded as all but certain death. It is, indeed, hard to tell upon what principles, or by what processes of reasoning, he was led to his inflexible determination. Like many other instances in his history, it illustrates an extraordinary sagacity and firmness of mind. He often exhibited similar daring, and was always justified by the result. The decision at Fort Laramie was the turning-point in his destiny. If he had yielded to the fears that had overcome all other minds, failure would have been stamped upon him forever. But as it was, he won the glory of inflexible and invincible resolution in the hearts of his admiring followers, and gave to the savages and all others who dealt with him an impression they ever after retained, that he was indeed a BRAVE, and that nothing could prevent his accomplishing whatever he undertook.

At Fort Laramie, an Indian lodge, about eighteen feet in diameter, and twenty in height, was procured in place of the tents, which had been found too thin to protect the instruments from the penetrating rains, or to withstand the violent winds prevalent in that region. These lodges constitute a warm and dry shelter in cold and storms, and are so constructed as to allow the lower part of the sides to be lifted up, permitting the breeze to pass freely through them in warm weather. They are particularly comfortable, then, as mosquitoes are never known to



enter them. At the encampment, on the close of the first day's march, while the men were busily attempting to put up the lodge, Mr. Bissonette, a trader resident at Fort Laramie, who had agreed to accompany the party to a limited point, overtook them. The Indian who had been engaged as a guide, accompanied by his wife, came in with Mr. Bissonette. Upon seeing the men engaged in their unaccustomed work, attempting to put up the lodge, she laughed heartily at their awkwardness, at once took hold herself, and pitched it with an expertness which it was some time before they learned to equal.

The point where the Platte leaves the Black Hills, presents a most remarkable and beautiful scene. The breadth of the stream, generally occupying nearly the whole width of the chasm through which it flows, is from two to three hundred feet. The wall on each side is of perpendicular rock, sometimes even overhanging, of a bright red color, from two to four hundred feet high, crowned with green summits, fringed with occasional pines. The river flows through with a swift stream of perfectly clear water, occasionally broken into rapids.

Here, as in all other portions of those vast plains, the surface of the fields is often covered with thickly set clumps of *artemisia*, and the whole air is saturated with the odor of camphor and spirits of turpentine proceeding from that



plant. The aromatic fragrance is found favorable to the restoration of invalids, particularly to persons threatened with consumptive complaints.

"*July 28.* We continued our way, and four miles beyond the ford Indians were discovered again; and I halted while a party was sent forward to ascertain who they were. In a short time they returned, accompanied by a number of Indians of the Oglallah band of Sioux. They gave us a very discouraging picture of the country. The great drought, and the plague of grasshoppers, had swept it so that scarce a blade of grass was to be seen, and there was not a buffalo to be found in the whole region. Their people, they further said, had been nearly starved to death, and we would find their road marked by lodges which they had thrown away in order to move more rapidly, and by the carcasses of the horses which they had eaten, or which had perished by starvation. Such was the prospect before us.

"When he had finished the interpretation of these things, Mr. Bissonette immediately rode up to me, and urgently advised that I should entirely abandon the further prosecution of my exploration. 'The best advice I can give you, is to turn back at once.' It was his own intention to return, as we had now reached the point to which he had engaged to attend me. In reply, I called up my men, and communicated to them

fully the information I had just received. I then expressed to them my fixed determination to proceed to the end of the enterprise on which I had been sent; but as the situation of the country gave me some reason to apprehend that it might be attended with an unfortunate result to some of us, I would leave it optional with them to continue with me or to return.

“ Among them were some five or six who I knew would remain. We had still ten days’ provisions; and, should no game be found, when this stock was expended, we had our horses and mules, which we could eat when other means of subsistence failed. But not a man flinched from the undertaking. ‘We’ll eat the mules,’ said Basil Lajeunesse; and thereupon we shook hands with our interpreter and his Indians, and parted. With them I sent back one of my men, Dumés, whom the effects of an old wound in the leg rendered incapable of continuing the journey on foot, and his horse seemed on the point of giving out. Having resolved to disencumber ourselves immediately of everything not absolutely necessary to our future operations, I turned directly in toward the river, and encamped on the left bank, a little above the place where our council had been held, and where a thick grove of willows offered a suitable spot for the object I had in view.

“ The carts having been discharged, the covers and wheels were taken off, and, with the frames,

carried into some low places among the willows, and concealed in the dense foliage in such a manner that the glitter of the iron work might not attract the observation of some straggling Indian. In the sand, which had been blown up into waves among the willows, a large hole was then dug, ten feet square and six deep. In the mean time, all our effects had been spread out upon the ground, and whatever was designed to be carried along with us separated and laid aside, and the remaining part carried to the hole and carefully covered up. As much as possible, all traces of our proceedings were obliterated, and it wanted but a rain to render our *cache* safe beyond discovery. All the men were now set at work to arrange the pack-saddles and make up the packs.

“The day was very warm and calm, and the sky entirely clear, except where, as usual along the summits of the mountainous ridge opposite, the clouds had congregated in masses. Our lodge had been planted, and, on account of the heat, the ground-pins had been taken out, and the lower part slightly raised. Near to it was standing the barometer, which swung in a tripod frame; and within the lodge, where a small fire had been built, Mr. Preuss was occupied in observing the temperature of boiling water. At this instant, and without any warning, until it was within fifty yards, a violent gust of wind dashed down the lodge, burying under it Mr. Preuss and

about a dozen men, who had attempted to keep it from being carried away. I succeeded in saving the barometer, which the lodge was carrying off with itself, but the thermometer was broken."

On the return of the party, a month afterwards, this *cache* was found unmolested.

Following up the Platte, they passed the lofty escarpments of red argillaceous sandstone, called the Red Buttes. The Hot Spring Gate is about four hundred yards in length. The river flows through with a quiet and even current. On each side is a smooth green shelf of prairie. The walls are of white sandstone, rise perpendicularly, and are about seventy yards apart. The height of the lower one of the two was found to be three hundred and sixty feet.

On the 31st of July they left the Platte, and crossed to the Sweetwater River. The next day they reached the vicinity of Rock Independence, an isolated mass of granite, about six hundred and fifty yards long, and forty high. A few miles further is the Devil's Gate. The length of the passage is about three hundred yards, and its width thirty-five yards. The walls are vertical, of granite, about four hundred feet in height. On the 8th of August they entered the SOUTH PASS.

"About six miles from our encampment brought us to the summit. The ascent had been so gradual, that, with all the intimate knowledge

possessed by Carson, who had made this country his home for seventeen years, we were obliged to watch very closely to find the place at which we had reached the culminating point. This was between two low hills, rising on either hand fifty or sixty feet. When I looked back at them, from the foot of the immediate slope on the western plain, their summits appeared to be about one hundred and twenty feet above. From the impression on my mind at this time, and subsequently on our return, I should compare the elevation which we surmounted immediately at the Pass, to the ascent of the Capitol hill from the avenue at Washington. It is difficult for me to fix positively the breadth of this pass. From the broken ground where it commences, at the foot of the Wind River chain, the view to the southeast is over a champaign country, broken, at the distance of nineteen miles, by the Table Rock; which, with the other isolated hills in its vicinity, seems to stand on a comparative plain. This I judged to be its termination, the ridge recovering its rugged character with the Table Rock. It will be seen that it in no manner resembles the places to which the term is commonly applied; nothing of the gorge-like character and winding ascents of the Alleghany passes in America; nothing of the Great St. Bernard and Simplon passes in Europe. Approaching it from the mouth of the Sweetwater, a sandy



plain, one hundred and twenty miles long, conducts by a gradual and regular ascent, to the summit, about seven thousand feet above the sea; and the traveller, without being reminded of any change by toilsome ascents, suddenly finds himself on the waters which flow to the Pacific Ocean. By the route we had travelled, the distance from Fort Laramie is three hundred and twenty miles, or nine hundred and fifty from the mouth of the Kansas."

From the South Pass, the route continued behind, or to the westward of the Wind River Mountains, among the head streams of the Colorado. But here Fremont must be allowed to tell his own story:—

"*August 10.* The air at sunrise is clear and pure, and the morning extremely cold, but beautiful. A lofty snow peak of the mountain is glittering in the first rays of the sun, which has not yet reached us. The long mountain wall to the east rising two thousand feet abruptly from the plain, behind which we see the peaks, is still dark, and cuts clear against the glowing sky. A fog, just risen from the river, lies along the base of the mountain. A little before sunrise the thermometer was at 35°, and at sunrise 33°. Water froze last night, and fires are very comfortable. The scenery becomes hourly more interesting and grand, and the view here is truly magnificent; but, indeed, it needs something to



repay the long prairie journey of a thousand miles. The sun has just shot above the wall, and makes a magical change. The whole valley is glowing and bright, and all the mountain peaks are gleaming like silver. Though these snow mountains are not the Alps, they have their own character of grandeur and magnificence, and will doubtless find pens and pencils to do them justice. In the scene before us, we feel how much wood improves a view. The pines on the mountain seemed to give it much additional beauty. I was agreeably disappointed in the character of the streams on this side of the ridge. Instead of the creeks, which description had led me to expect, I find bold, broad streams, with three or four feet water, and a rapid current. The fork on which we are encamped is upwards of a hundred feet wide, timbered with groves or thickets of the low willow. We were now approaching the loftiest part of the Wind River chain; and I left the valley a few miles from our encampment, intending to penetrate the mountains as far as possible with the whole party. We were soon involved in very broken ground, among long ridges covered with fragments of granite. Winding our way up a long ravine, we came unexpectedly in view of a most beautiful lake, set like a gem in the mountains. The sheet of water lay transversely across the direction we had been pursu-

ing; and, descending the steep, rocky ridge, where it was necessary to lead our horses, we followed its banks to the southern extremity. Here a view of the utmost magnificence and grandeur burst upon our eyes. With nothing between us and their feet to lessen the effect of the whole height, a grand bed of snow-capped mountains rose before us, pile upon pile, glowing in the bright light of an August day. Immediately below them lay the lake, between two ridges, covered with dark pines, which swept down from the main chain to the spot where we stood. Here, where the lake glittered in the open sunlight, its banks of yellow sand and the light foliage of aspen groves contrasted well with the gloomy pines. 'Never before,' said Mr. Preuss, 'in this country or in Europe, have I seen such magnificent, grand rocks.' I was so much pleased with the beauty of the place, that I determined to make the main camp here, where our animals would find good pasturage, and explore the mountains, with a small party of men. Proceeding a little further, we came suddenly upon the outlet of the lake, where it found its way through a narrow passage between low hills. Dark pines, which overhung the stream, and masses of rock, where the water foamed along, gave it much romantic beauty. Where we crossed, which was immediately at the outlet, it is two hundred and fifty feet wide, and so deep

that with difficulty we were able to ford it. Its bed was an accumulation of rocks, boulders, and broad slabs, and large angular fragments, among which the animals fell repeatedly.

“The current was very swift, and the water cold, and of a crystal purity. In crossing this stream, I met with a great misfortune in having my barometer broken. It was the only one. A great part of the interest of the journey for me was in the exploration of these mountains, of which so much had been said that was doubtful and contradictory; and now their snowy peaks rose majestically before me, and the only means of giving them authentically to science, the object of my anxious solicitude by night and day, was destroyed. We had brought this barometer in safety a thousand miles, and broke it almost among the snow of the mountains. The loss was felt by the whole camp—all had seen my anxiety, and aided me in preserving it. The height of these mountains, considered by the hunters and traders the highest in the whole range, had been a theme of constant discussion among them; and all had looked forward with pleasure to the moment when the instrument, which they believed to be true as the sun, should stand upon the summits, and decide their disputes. Their grief was only inferior to my own.

“As soon as the camp was formed, I set about

endeavoring to repair my barometer. As I have already said, this was a standard cistern-barometer, of Troughton's construction. The glass cistern had been broken about midway; but as the instrument had been kept in a proper position, no air had found its way into the tube, the end of which had always remained covered. I had with me a number of vials of tolerably thick glass, some of which were of the same diameter as the cistern, and I spent the day in slowly working on these, endeavoring to cut them of the requisite length; but as my instrument was a very rough file, I invariably broke them. A groove was cut in one of the trees, where the barometer was placed during the night, to be out of the way of any possible danger, and in the morning I commenced again. Among the powder-horns in the camp, I found one which was very transparent, so that its contents could be almost as plainly seen as through glass. This I boiled and stretched on a piece of wood to the requisite diameter, and scraped it very thin, in order to increase to the utmost its transparency. I then secured it firmly in its place on the instrument, with strong glue made from a buffalo, and filled it with mercury, properly heated. A piece of skin, which had covered one of the vials, furnished a good pocket, which was well secured with strong thread and glue, and then the brass cover was screwed to its

place. The instrument was left some time to dry ; and when I reversed it, a few hours after, I had the satisfaction to find it in perfect order ; its indications being about the same as on the other side of the lake before it had been broken. Our success in this little incident diffused pleasure throughout the camp ; and we immediately set about our preparations for ascending the mountains.

“ I was desirous to keep strictly within the scope of my instructions ; and it would have required ten or fifteen additional days for the accomplishment of this object ; our animals had become very much worn out with the length of the journey ; game was very scarce ; and, though it does not appear in the course of the narrative, (as I have avoided dwelling upon trifling incidents not connected with the objects of the expedition,) the spirits of the men had been much exhausted by the hardships and privations to which they had been subjected. Our provisions had wellnigh all disappeared. Bread had been long out of the question ; and of all our stock, we had remaining two or three pounds of coffee, and a small quantity of macaroni, which had been husbanded with great care for the mountain expedition we were about to undertake. Our daily meal consisted of dry buffalo meat, cooked in tallow ; and, as we had not dried this with Indian skill, part of it was spoiled ; and



what remained of good, was as hard as wood, having much the taste and appearance of so many pieces of bark. Even of this, our stock was rapidly diminishing in a camp which was capable of consuming two buffaloes in every twenty-four hours. These animals had entirely disappeared; and it was not probable that we should fall in with them again until we returned to the Sweetwater.

“Our arrangements for the ascent were rapidly completed. We were in a hostile country, which rendered the greatest vigilance and circumspection necessary. The pass at the north end of the mountain was generally infested by Blackfeet; and immediately opposite was one of their forts, on the edge of a little thicket, two or three hundred feet from our encampment. We were posted in a grove of beech, on the margin of the lake, and a few hundred feet long, with a narrow *prairillon* on the inner side, bordered by the rocky ridge. In the upper end of this grove we cleared a circular space about forty feet in diameter, and with the felled timber and interwoven branches, surrounded it with a breastwork five feet in height. A gap was left for a gate on the inner side, by which the animals were to be driven in and secured, while the men slept around the little work. It was half hidden by the foliage; and, garrisoned by twelve resolute men, would have set at defiance



any band of savages which might chance to discover them in the interval of our absence. Fifteen of the best mules, with fourteen men, were selected for the mountain party. Our provisions consisted of dried meat for two days, with our little stock of coffee and some macaroni. In addition to the barometer and a thermometer, I took with me a sextant and spy-glass, and we had, of course, our compasses. In charge of the camp I left Bernier, one of my most trustworthy men, who possessed the most determined courage.

"*August 12.* Early in the morning we left the camp, fifteen in number, well armed, of course, and mounted on our best mules. A pack animal carried our provisions, with a coffee-pot and kettle, and three or four tin cups. Every man had a blanket strapped over his saddle, to serve for his bed, and the instruments were carried by turns on their backs. We entered directly on rough and rocky ground; and, just after crossing the ridge, had the good fortune to shoot an antelope. We heard the roar, and had a glimpse of a waterfall as we rode along; and, crossing in our way two fine streams, tributary to the Colorado, in about two hours' ride we reached the top of the first row or range of the mountains. Here, again, a view of the most romantic beauty met our eyes. It seemed as if, from the vast expanse of unin-

teresting prairie we had passed over, Nature had collected all her beauties together in one chosen place. We were overlooking a deep valley, which was entirely occupied by three lakes, and from the brink the surrounding ridges rose precipitously five hundred and a thousand feet, covered with the dark green of the balsam pine, relieved on the border of the lake with the light foliage of the aspen. They all communicated with each other; and the green of the waters, common to mountain lakes of great depth, showed that it would be impossible to cross them. The surprise manifested by our guides when these impassable obstacles suddenly barred our progress, proved that they were among the hidden treasures of the place, unknown even to the wandering trappers of the region. Descending the hill, we proceeded to make our way along the margin to the southern extremity. A narrow strip of angular fragments of rock sometimes afforded a rough pathway for our mules, but generally we rode along the shelving side, occasionally scrambling up, at a considerable risk of tumbling back into the lake.

“The slope was frequently  $60^{\circ}$ ; the pines grew densely together, and the ground was covered with the branches and trunks of trees. The air was fragrant with the odor of the pines; and I realized this delightful morning the pleasure of breathing that mountain air which makes

a constant theme of the hunter's praise, and which now made us feel as if we had all been drinking some exhilarating gas. The depths of this unexplored forest were a place to delight the heart of a botanist. There was a rich undergrowth of plants, and numerous gay-colored flowers in brilliant bloom.

"We had reached a very elevated point, and in the valley below, and among the hills, were a number of lakes at different levels; some, two or three hundred feet above others, with which they communicated by foaming torrents. Even to our great height, the roar of the cataracts came up, and we could see them leaping down in lines of snowy foam. From this scene of busy waters, we turned abruptly into the stillness of a forest, where we rode among the open bolls of the pines, over a lawn of verdant grass, having strikingly the air of cultivated grounds. This led us, after a time, among masses of rock which had no vegetable earth but in hollows and crevices, though still the pine forest continued. Toward evening, we reached a defile, or rather a hole in the mountains, entirely shut in by dark pine-covered rocks.

"Our table service was rather scant; and we held the meat in our hands, and clean rocks made good plates, on which we spread our macaroni. Among all the strange places on which we had occasion to encamp during our

long journey, none have left so vivid an impression on my mind as the camp of this evening. The disorder of the masses which surrounded us; the little hole through which we saw the stars overhead; the dark pines where we slept; and the rocks lit up with the glow of our fires, made a night-picture of very wild beauty.

*“August 13.* The morning was bright and pleasant, just cool enough to make exercise agreeable, and we soon entered the defile I had seen the preceding day. It was smoothly carpeted with a soft grass, and scattered over with groups of flowers, of which yellow was the predominant color. Sometimes we were forced, by an occasional difficult pass, to pick our way on a narrow ledge along the side of the defile, and the mules were frequently on their knees; but these obstructions were rare, and we journeyed on in the sweet morning air, delighted at our good fortune in having found such a beautiful entrance to the mountains. This road continued for about three miles, when we suddenly reached its termination in one of the grand views, which, at every turn, meet the traveller in this magnificent region. Here the defile up which we had travelled, opened out into a small lawn, where, in a little lake, the stream had its source.

“It is not by the splendor of far-off views, which have lent such a glory to the Alps, that

these impress the mind; but by a gigantic disorder of enormous masses, and a savage sublimity of naked rock, in wonderful contrast with innumerable green spots of a rich floral beauty, shut up in their stern recesses. Their wildness seems well suited to the character of the people who inhabit the country.

“I determined to leave our animals here, and make the rest of our way on foot. The peak appeared so near, that there was no doubt of our returning before night; and a few men were left in charge of the mules, with our provisions and blankets. We took with us nothing but our arms and instruments, and, as the day had become warm, the greater part left our coats. Having made an early dinner, we started again. We were soon involved in the most ragged precipices, nearing the central chain very slowly, and rising but little. The first ridge hid a succession of others; and when, with great fatigue and difficulty, we had climbed up five hundred feet, it was but to make an equal descent on the other side; all these intervening places were filled with small deep lakes, which met the eye in every direction, descending from one level to another, sometimes under bridges formed by huge fragments of granite, beneath which was heard the roar of the water. These constantly obstructed our path, forcing us to make long *détours*; frequently obliged to



retrace our steps, and frequently falling among the rocks. Maxwell was precipitated toward the face of a precipice, and saved himself from going over by throwing himself flat on the ground. We clambered on, always expecting, with every ridge that we crossed, to reach the foot of the peaks, and always disappointed, until about four o'clock, when, pretty well worn out, we reached the shore of a little lake, in which there was a rocky island.

“By the time we had reached the further side of the lake, we found ourselves all exceedingly fatigued, and, much to the satisfaction of the whole party, we encamped. The spot we had chosen was a broad, flat rock, in some measure protected from the winds by the surrounding crags, and the trunks of fallen pines afforded us bright fires. Near by was a foaming torrent, which tumbled into the little lake about one hundred and fifty feet below us, and which, by way of distinction, we have called Island Lake. We had reached the upper limit of the piney region; as, above this point, no tree was to be seen, and patches of snow lay everywhere around us on the cold sides of the rocks. The flora of the region we had traversed since leaving our mules was extremely rich, and, among the characteristic plants, the scarlet flowers of the *dodecatheon dentatum* everywhere met the eye in great abundance. A small green ravine, on the



edge of which we were encamped, was filled with a profusion of alpine plants in brilliant bloom.

"I was taken ill shortly after we had encamped, and continued so until late in the night, with violent headache, and vomiting. This was probably caused by the excessive fatigue I had undergone, and want of food, and perhaps, also, in some measure, by the rarity of the air. The night was cold, as a violent gale from the north had sprung up at sunset, which entirely blew away the heat of the fires. The cold, and our granite beds, had not been favorable to sleep, and we were glad to see the face of the sun in the morning. Not being delayed by any preparation for breakfast, we set out immediately.

"On every side as we advanced was heard the roar of waters, and of a torrent, which we followed up a short distance, until it expanded into a lake about one mile in length. On the northern side of the lake was a bank of ice, or rather of snow covered with a crust of ice. Carson had been our guide into the mountains, and, agreeably to his advice, we left this little valley, and took to the ridges again; which we found extremely broken, and where we were again involved among precipices. Here were ice-fields; among which we were all dispersed, seeking each the best path to ascend the peak. Mr. Preuss attempted to walk along the upper

edge of one of these fields, which sloped away at an angle of about twenty degrees; but his feet slipped from under him, and he went plunging down the plane. A few hundred feet below, at the bottom, were some fragments of sharp rock, on which he landed; and though he turned a couple of somersets, fortunately received no injury beyond a few bruises. Two of the men, Clement Lambert and Descoteaux, had been taken ill, and lay down on the rocks a short distance below; and at this point I was attacked with headache and giddiness, accompanied by vomiting, as on the day before. Finding myself unable to proceed, I sent the barometer over to Mr. Preuss, who was in a gap two or three hundred yards distant, desiring him to reach the peak, if possible, and take an observation there. He found himself unable to proceed further in that direction, and took an observation, where the barometer stood at 19.401; attached thermometer 50°, in the gap. Carson, who had gone over to him, succeeded in reaching one of the snowy summits of the main ridge, whence he saw the peak towards which all our efforts had been directed, towering eight or ten hundred feet into the air above him. In the mean time, finding myself grow rather worse than better, and doubtful how far my strength would carry me, I sent Basil Lajeunesse, with four men, back to the place where the mules had been left.

“ We were now better acquainted with the topography of the country, and I directed him to bring back with him, if it were in any way possible, four or five mules, with provisions and blankets. With me were Maxwell and Ayer; and after we had remained nearly an hour on the rock, it became so unpleasantly cold, though the day was bright, that we set out on our return to the camp, at which we all arrived safely, straggling in one after the other. I continued ill during the afternoon, but became better towards sundown, when my recovery was completed by the appearance of Basil and four men, all mounted. The men who had gone with him had been too much fatigued to return, and were relieved by those in charge of the horses; but in his powers of endurance Basil resembled more a mountain goat than a man. They brought blankets and provisions, and we enjoyed well our dried meat and a cup of good coffee. We rolled ourselves up in our blankets, and, with our feet turned to a blazing fire, slept soundly until morning.

“ *August 15.* It had been supposed that we had finished with the mountains; and the evening before, it had been arranged that Carson should set out at daylight, and return to breakfast at the Camp of the Mules, taking with him all but four or five men, who were to stay with me and bring back the mules and instruments.

Accordingly, at the break of day they set out. With Mr. Preuss and myself remained Basil Lajeunesse, Clement Lambert, Janisse, and Descoteaux. When we had secured strength for the day by a hearty breakfast, we covered what remained, which was enough for one meal, with rocks, in order that it might be safe from any marauding bird; and, saddling our mules, turned our faces once more towards the peaks. This time we determined to proceed quietly and cautiously, deliberately resolved to accomplish our object if it were within the compass of human means. We were of opinion that a long defile which lay to the left of yesterday's route would lead us to the foot of the main peak. Our mules had been refreshed by the fine grass in the little ravine at the Island camp, and we intended to ride up the defile as far as possible, in order to husband our strength for the main ascent. Though this was a fine passage, still, it was a defile of the most rugged mountains known, and we had many a rough and steep slippery place to cross before reaching the end. In this place the sun rarely shone; snow lay along the border of the small stream which flowed through it, and occasional icy passages made the footing of the mules very insecure, and the rocks and ground were moist with the trickling waters in this spring of mighty rivers. We soon had the satisfaction to

find ourselves riding along the huge wall which forms the central summit of the chain. There at last it rose by our sides, a nearly perpendicular wall of granite, terminating 2,000 to 3,000 feet above our heads in a serrated line of broken, jagged cones. We rode on until we came almost immediately below the main peak, which I denominated the Snow Peak, as it exhibited more snow to the eye than any of the neighboring summits. Here were three small lakes of a green color, each of perhaps a thousand yards in diameter, and apparently very deep. These lay in a kind of chasm; and, according to the barometer, we had attained but a few hundred feet above the Island lake. The barometer here stood at 20.450, attached thermometer 70°.

“ We managed to get our mules up to a little bench about a hundred feet above the lakes, where there was a patch of good grass, and turned them loose to graze. During our rough ride to this place, they had exhibited a wonderful surefootedness. Parts of the defile were filled with angular, sharp fragments of rock, three or four and eight or ten feet cube; and among these they had worked their way, leaping from one narrow point to another, rarely making a false step, and giving us no occasion to dismount. Having divested ourselves of every unnecessary encumbrance, we commenced the ascent. This time, like experienced travel-



lers, we did not press ourselves, but climbed leisurely, sitting down so soon as we found breath beginning to fail. At intervals, we reached places where a number of springs gushed from the rocks, and about 1,800 feet above the lakes came to the snow line. From this point our progress was uninterrupted climbing. Hitherto, I had worn a pair of thick moccasins, with soles of *parflèche*; but here I put on a light thin pair, which I had brought for the purpose, as now the use of our toes became necessary to a further advance. I availed myself of a sort of comb of the mountain, which stood against the wall like a buttress, and which the wind and the solar radiation, joined to the steepness of the smooth rock, had kept almost entirely free from snow. Up this I made my way rapidly. Our cautious method of advancing in the outset had spared my strength; and, with the exception of a slight disposition to headache, I felt no remains of yesterday's illness. In a few minutes we reached a point where the buttress was overhanging, and there was no other way of surmounting the difficulty than by passing around one side of it, which was the face of a vertical precipice of several hundred feet."

*Parflèche* is the name given to buffalo hide. The Indian women prepare it by scraping and drying. It is exceedingly tough and hard, and



receives its name from the circumstance that it cannot be pierced by arrows or spears. The entire dress of Fremont and his party, on their ascent to the "top of America," consisted of a blue flannel shirt, free and open at the neck, the collar turning down over a black silk handkerchief tied loosely, blue cloth pantaloons, a slouched broad-brimmed hat, and moccasins as above described. It was well adapted to climbing,—quite light, and at the same time warm, and every way comfortable.

"Putting hands and feet in the crevices between the blocks, I succeeded in getting over it, and, when I reached the top, found my companions in a small valley below. Descending to them, we continued climbing, and in a short time reached the crest. I sprang upon the summit, and another step would have precipitated me into an immense snow-field five hundred feet below. To the edge of this field was a sheer icy precipice; and then, with a gradual fall, the field sloped off for about a mile, until it struck the foot of another lower ridge. I stood on a narrow crest, about three feet in width, with an inclination of about  $20^{\circ}$  N.  $51^{\circ}$  E. As soon as I had gratified the first feelings of curiosity, I descended, and each man ascended in his turn; for I would only allow one at a time to mount the unstable and precarious slab, which it seemed a breath would hurl into the abyss below. We

mounted the barometer in the snow of the summit, and, fixing a ramrod in a crevice, unfurled the national flag, to wave in the breeze where never flag waved before. During our morning's ascent, we had met no sign of animal life, except a small bird having the appearance of a sparrow. A stillness the most profound and a terrible solitude forced themselves constantly on the mind as the great features of the place. Here, on the summit, where the stillness was absolute, unbroken by any sound, and the solitude complete, we thought ourselves beyond the region of animated life; but while we were sitting on the rock, a solitary bee (*bromus*, the humble bee) came winging his flight from the eastern valley, and lit on the knee of one of the men.

“Around us, the whole scene had one main striking feature, which was that of terrible convulsion. Parallel to its length, the ridge was split into chasms and fissures, between which rose the thin, lofty walls, terminated with slender minarets and columns, which is correctly represented in the view from the camp on Island Lake. According to the barometer, the little crest of the wall on which we stood was three thousand five hundred and seventy feet above that place, and two thousand seven hundred and eighty above the little lakes at the bottom, immediately at our feet. Our camp at the Two Hills (an astronomical station) bore south  $3^{\circ}$

east, which, with a bearing afterward obtained from a fixed position, enabled us to locate the peak. The bearing of the *Trois Tetons* was north  $50^{\circ}$  west, and the direction of the central ridge of the Wind River Mountains south  $39^{\circ}$  east. The summit rock was gneiss, succeeded by sienitic gneiss. Sienite and feldspar succeeded in our descent to the snow line, where we found a feldspathic granite. I had remarked that the noise produced by the explosion of our pistols had the usual degree of loudness, but was not in the least prolonged, expiring almost instantaneously. Having now made what observations our means afforded, we proceeded to descend. We had accomplished an object of laudable ambition, and beyond the strict order of our instructions. We had climbed the loftiest peak of the Rocky Mountains, and looked down upon the snow a thousand feet below, and, standing where never human foot had stood before, felt the exultation of first explorers. It was about two o'clock when we left the summit; and when we reached the bottom, the sun had already sunk behind the wall, and the day was drawing to a close. It would have been pleasant to have lingered here and on the summit longer; but we hurried away as rapidly as the ground would permit, for it was an object to regain our party as soon as possible, not knowing what accident the next hour might bring forth.



Hoisting the American flag on the highest peak of the Rocky Mountains.





“We reached our deposit of provisions at nightfall. Here was not the inn which awaits the tired traveller on his return from Mont Blanc, or the orange groves of South America, with their refreshing juices and soft fragrant air; but we found our little *cache* of dried meat and coffee undisturbed. Though the moon was bright, the road was full of precipices, and the fatigue of the day had been great. We therefore abandoned the idea of rejoining our friends, and lay down on the rock, and, in spite of the cold, slept soundly.

“*August 16.* We left our encampment with the daylight. We saw on our way large flocks of the mountain goat looking down on us from the cliffs. At the crack of a rifle they would bound off among the rocks, and in a few minutes make their appearance on some lofty peak, some hundred or a thousand feet above. It is needless to attempt any further description of the country; the portion over which we travelled this morning was rough as imagination could picture it, and to us seemed equally beautiful. A concourse of lakes and rushing waters, mountains of rocks naked and destitute of vegetable earth, dells and ravines of the most exquisite beauty, all kept green and fresh by the great moisture in the air, and sown with brilliant flowers, and everywhere, thrown around all, the glory of most magnificent scenes; these constitute the features of the place,



and impress themselves vividly on the mind of the traveller. It was not until 11 o'clock that we reached the place where our animals had been left when we first attempted the mountains on foot. Near one of the still burning fires we found a piece of meat, which our friends had thrown away, and which furnished us a mouthful—a very scanty breakfast. We continued directly on, and reached our camp on the mountain lake at dusk. We found all well. Nothing had occurred to interrupt the quiet since our departure, and the fine grass and good cool water had done much to re-establish our animals. All heard with great delight the order to turn our faces homeward; and toward sundown of the 17th, we encamped again at the Two Buttes."

The Peak which had thus been reached was found to be, by the barometer, 13,570 feet above the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, and is supposed to be the highest point of the Rocky Mountains. On the north, within the range of the eye, were the snow-clad mountains that contain the sources of the Columbia and Missouri, on the west the innumerable lakes and streams that feed the Colorado of the Gulf of California, and on the east the springs of the Yellow Stone branch of the Missouri. On the south the headwaters of the Platte or Nebraska gush from their fountains, and not far beyond them are the orig-

inal mountain reservoirs of the Arkansas. It is the great central summit of the continent, and is properly marked, on all maps, in honor of the first man that ever stood upon it, Fremont's Peak.

The reader will notice, when we reach the period just prior to the opening of the California war, that it also fell to the lot of Fremont to unfurl the banner of our country for the first time from the top of the Sierra, on a mountain range near the Pacific coast, at Hawk's Peak.

It is, by the way, an interesting fact that the Indians have a superstitious awe of the craggy, cavernous, and perilous recesses and declivities of these great mountain ranges. Hidden cata-racts and torrents produce sounds and echoes that appall the untutored imagination. The whole scene is felt to be the abode of supernatural beings, and the savage shrinks from ascending the slopes, or threading their broken passages. We may consider it certain, therefore, that no Indian had even attempted to climb Fremont's Peak.

On the 19th, the returning party repassed the point where the waters divide, to seek the Atlantic and Pacific, and reached Rock Independence on the evening of the 22d. Except in a depression on the summit, where there is a scanty growth of shrubs, and a solitary dwarf pine, the rock is entirely bare. Wherever the surface is sufficiently smooth, and in some in-

stances as high up as sixty or eighty feet, the names of visitors are inscribed. Those of traders, missionaries, and scientific travellers, are legible at all points.

"Here," says Fremont, in his Journal, "not unmindful of the custom of early travellers and explorers in our country, I engraved on this rock of the Far West a symbol of the Christian faith. Among the thickly inscribed names, I made on the hard granite the impression of a large cross, which I covered with a black preparation of India rubber, well calculated to resist the influence of wind and rain. It stands amidst the names of many who have long since found their way to the grave, and for whom the huge rock is a giant gravestone.

"One George Weymouth was sent out to Maine, by the Earl of Southampton, Lord Arundel, and others, and in the narrative of his discoveries he says: 'the next day, we ascended in our pinnacle that part of the river which lies more to the westward, carrying with us a cross,—a thing never omitted by any Christian traveller,—which we erected at the ultimate end of our route.' This was in the year 1605; and in 1842 I obeyed the feeling of early travellers, and left the impression of the cross deeply engraved on the vast rock, one thousand miles beyond the Mississippi, to which discoverers have given the national name of Rock Independence."

Having planted the Flag of the Union on the topmost peak of the central mountains, and inscribed the symbol, dear to all believing hearts, upon the mighty monumental rock at their base, he had fulfilled the holiest aspirations of patriotism and piety, and, as the Explorer of the vast interior of North America, had pledged and consecrated it to Republican Freedom and Christian Civilization.

As his instructions required him to survey the course and bed of the Platte, if possible, he sent the main body of his men across the country to Goat Island, with orders to remain there until he rejoined them, and with Mr. Preuss, and five of his best men, namely, Clement Lambert, Basil Lajeunesse, Honoré Ayot, Benoist and Desco-teaux, he pursued the descending river. The India-rubber boat was filled with air, and placed in the water, with what was necessary for their purpose, and they put forth upon its current. The thrilling adventures of the voyage, he relates as follows:—

“There appeared no scarcity of water, and we took on board, with various instruments and baggage, provisions for ten or twelve days. We paddled down the river rapidly, for our little craft was light as a duck on the water; and the sun had been sometime risen, when we heard before us a hollow roar, which we supposed to be that of a fall, of which we had heard a vague

rumor, but whose exact locality no one had been able to describe to us. We were approaching a ridge, through which the river passes by a place called 'cañon,' (pronounced *kanyon*,) a Spanish word, signifying a piece of artillery, the barrel of a gun, or any kind of tube; and which, in this country, has been adopted to describe the passage of a river between perpendicular rocks of great height, which frequently approach each other so closely overhead as to form a kind of tunnel over the stream, which foams along below, half-choked up by fallen fragments. Between the mouth of the Sweetwater and Goat Island, there is probably a fall of three hundred feet, and that was principally made in the cañons before us; as, without them, the water was comparatively smooth. As we neared the ridge, the river made a sudden turn, and swept squarely down against one of the walls of the cañon with a great velocity, and so steep a descent, that it had to the eye the appearance of an inclined plane. When we launched into this, the men jumped overboard, to check the velocity of the boat, but were soon in water up to their necks, and our boat ran on; but we succeeded in bringing her to a small point of rocks on the right, at the mouth of the cañon. Here was a kind of elevated sand beach, not many yards square, backed by the rocks, and around the point the river swept at a right angle. Trunks of trees depos-



ited on jutting points twenty or thirty feet above, and other marks, showed that the water here frequently rose to a considerable height. The ridge was of the same decomposing granite already mentioned, and the water had worked the surface, in many places, into a wavy surface of ridges and holes. We ascended the rocks to reconnoitre the ground, and from the summit the passage appeared to be a continued cataract foaming over many obstructions, and broken by a number of small falls. We saw nowhere a fall answering to that which had been described to us as having twenty or twenty-five feet; but still concluded this to be the place in question, as, in the season of floods, the rush of the river against the wall would produce a great rise, and the waters, reflected squarely off, would descend through the passage in a sheet of foam, having every appearance of a large fall. Eighteen years previous to this time, as I subsequently learned from himself, Mr. Fitzpatrick, somewhere above on this river, had embarked with a valuable cargo of beaver. Unacquainted with the stream, which he believed would conduct him safely to the Missouri, he came unexpectedly into this cañon, where he was wrecked, with the total loss of his furs. It would have been a work of great time and labor to pack our baggage across the ridge, and I determined to run the cañon. We all again embarked, and at



first attempted to check the way of the boat; but the water swept through with so much violence that we narrowly escaped being swamped, and were obliged to let her go in the full force of the current, and trust to the skill of the boatmen. The dangerous places in this cañon were where huge rocks had fallen from above, and hemmed in the already narrow pass of the river to an open space of three or four and five feet. These obstructions raised the water considerably above, which was sometimes precipitated over in a fall; and at other places, where this dam was too high, rushed through the contracted opening with tremendous violence. Had our boat been made of wood, in passing the narrows she would have been staved; but her elasticity preserved her unhurt from every shock, and she seemed fairly to leap over the falls.

“In this way we passed three cataracts in succession, where, perhaps, one hundred feet of smooth water intervened; and finally, with a shout of pleasure at our success, issued from our tunnel into the open day beyond. We were so delighted with the performance of our boat, and so confident in her powers, that we would not have hesitated to leap a fall of ten feet with her. We put to shore for breakfast at some willows on the right bank, immediately below the mouth of the cañon; for it was now eight o'clock, and we had been working since daylight,

and were all wet, fatigued, and hungry. While the men were preparing breakfast, I went out to reconnoitre. The view was very limited. The course of the river was smooth, so far as I could see; on both sides were broken hills; and but a mile or two below was another high ridge. The rock at the mouth of the cañon was still the decomposing granite, with great quantities of mica, which made a very glittering sand.

“We reëmbarked at nine o’clock, and in about twenty minutes reached the next cañon. Landing on a rocky shore at its commencement, we ascended the ridge to reconnoitre. Portage was out of the question. So far as we could see, the jagged rocks pointed out the course of the cañon, on a winding line of seven or eight miles. It was simply a narrow, dark chasm in the rock; and here the perpendicular faces were much higher than in the previous pass, being at this end two to three hundred, and further down, as we afterward ascertained, five hundred feet in vertical height. Our previous success had made us bold, and we determined again to run the cañon. Every thing was secured as firmly as possible; and, having divested ourselves of the greater part of our clothing, we pushed into the stream. To save our chronometer from accident, Mr. Preuss took it, and attempted to proceed along the shore on the masses of rock, which in places were piled up on either side; but, after

he had walked about five minutes, every thing like shore disappeared, and the vertical wall came squarely down into the water. He therefore waited until we came up. An ugly pass lay before us. We had made fast to the stern of the boat a strong rope about fifty feet long; and three of the men clambered along among the rocks, and with this rope let her down slowly through the pass. In several places high rocks lay scattered about in the channel; and in the narrows it required all our strength and skill to avoid staving the boat on the sharp points. In one of these, the boat proved a little too broad, and stuck fast for an instant, while the water flew over us; fortunately it was but for an instant, as our united strength forced her immediately through. The water swept overboard only a sextant and a pair of saddlebags. I caught the sextant as it passed by me; but the saddlebags became the prey of the whirlpools. We reached the place where Mr. Preuss was standing, took him on board, and, with the aid of the boat, put the men with the rope on the succeeding pile of rocks. We found this passage much worse than the previous one, and our position was rather a bad one. To go back, was impossible; before us, the cataract was a sheet of foam; and, shut up in the chasm by the rocks, which in some places seemed almost to meet overhead, the roar of the water was deafening. We pushed off

again; but, after making a little distance, the force of the current became too great for the men on shore, and two of them let go the rope. Lajeunesse, the third man, hung on, and was jerked headforemost into the river from a rock about twelve feet high; and down the boat shot like an arrow, Basil following us in the rapid current, and exerting all his strength to keep in mid channel—his head only seen occasionally like a black spot in the white foam. How far we went, I do not exactly know; but we succeeded in turning the boat into an eddy below. ‘‘*Cré Dieu,*’ said Basil Lejeunesse, as he arrived immediately after us, ‘*Je crois bien que j’ai nagé un demi mile,*’—‘I believe, indeed, that I have swum half a mile.’ He had owed his life to his skill as a swimmer; and I determined to take him and the others on board, and trust to skill and fortune to reach the other end in safety. We placed ourselves on our knees, with the short paddles in our hands, the most skilful boatman being at the bow; and again we commenced our rapid descent. We cleared rock after rock, and shot past fall after fall, our little boat seeming to play with the cataract. We became flushed with success and familiar with the danger; and, yielding to the excitement of the occasion, broke forth together into a Canadian boat song. Singing, or rather shouting, we dashed along; and were, I believe, in the midst of the

chorus, when the boat struck a concealed rock immediately at the foot of a fall, which whirled her over in an instant. Three of my men could not swim, and my first feeling was to assist them, and save some of our effects; but a sharp concussion or two convinced me that I had not yet saved myself. A few strokes brought me into an eddy, and I landed on a pile of rocks on the left side. Looking around, I saw that Mr. Preuss had gained the shore on the same side, about twenty yards below; and a little climbing and swimming soon brought him to my side. On the opposite side, against the wall, lay the boat bottom up; and Lambert was in the act of saving Descoteaux, whom he had grasped by the hair, and who could not swim; '*Lache pas,*' said he, as I afterward learned, '*lache pas, cher frère,*'—'*Don't let go, don't let go, dear brother.*' '*Crains pas,*' was the reply, '*Je m'en vais mourir avant que de te lâcher,*'—'*Fear not, I will die before I let you go.*' Such was the reply of courage and generosity in this danger. For a hundred yards below, the current was covered with floating books and boxes, bales of blankets, and scattered articles of clothing; and so strong and boiling was the stream, that even our heavy instruments, which were all in cases, kept on the surface, and the sextant, circle, and the long black box of the telescope, were in view at once. For a moment, I felt somewhat disheartened. All our books—



almost every record of the journey—our journals and registers of astronomical and barometrical observations—had been lost in a moment. But it was no time to indulge in regrets; and I immediately set about endeavoring to save something from the wreck. Making ourselves understood as well as possible by signs, (for nothing could be heard in the roar of waters,) we commenced our operations. Of every thing on board, the only article that had been saved was my double-barrelled gun, which Descoteaux had caught, and clung to with drowning tenacity. The men continued down the river on the left bank. Mr. Preuss and myself descended on the side we were on; and Lajeunesse, with a paddle in his hand, jumped on the boat alone, and continued down the cañon. She was now light, and cleared every bad place with much less difficulty. In a short time, he was joined by Lambert; and the search was continued for about a mile and a half, which was as far as the boat could proceed in the pass.

“Here the walls were about five hundred feet high, and the fragments of rocks from above had choked the river into a hollow pass but one or two feet above the surface. Through this and the interstices of the rock, the water found its way. Favored beyond our expectations, all of our registers had been recovered, with the exception of one of my journals, which contained the



notes and incidents of travel, and topographical descriptions, a number of scattered astronomical observations, principally meridian altitudes of the sun, and our barometrical register west of Laramie. Fortunately, our other journals contained duplicates of the most important barometrical observations which had been taken in the mountains. These, with a few scattered notes, were all that had been preserved of our meteorological observations. In addition to these, we saved the circle; and these, with a few blankets, constituted every thing that had been rescued from the waters.

“The day was running rapidly away, and it was necessary to reach Goat Island, whither the party had preceded us, before night. In this uncertain country, the traveller is so much in the power of chance, that we became somewhat uneasy in regard to them. Should any thing have occurred, in the brief interval of our separation, to prevent our rejoining them, our situation would be rather a desperate one. We had not a morsel of provisions—our arms and ammunition were gone—and we were entirely at the mercy of any straggling party of savages, and not a little in danger of starvation. We therefore set out at once in two parties. Mr. Preuss and myself on the left, and the men on the opposite side of the river. Climbing out of the cañon, we found ourselves in a very broken

country, where we were not yet able to recognize any locality. In the course of our descent through the cañon, the rock, which at the upper end was of the decomposing granite, changed into a varied sandstone formation. The hills and points of the ridges were covered with fragments of a yellow sandstone, of which the strata were sometimes displayed in the broken ravines which interrupted our course, and made our walk extremely fatiguing. At one point of the cañon the red argillaceous sandstone rose in a wall of five hundred feet, surmounted by a stratum of white sandstone; and in an opposite ravine a column of red sandstone rose, in form like a steeple, about one hundred and fifty feet high. The scenery was extremely picturesque, and, notwithstanding our forlorn condition, we were frequently obliged to stop and admire it. Our progress was not very rapid. We had emerged from the water half naked, and, on arriving at the top of the precipice, I found myself with only one moccasin. The fragments of rock made walking painful, and I was frequently obliged to stop and pull out the thorns of the *cactus*, here the prevailing plant, and with which a few minutes' walk covered the bottom of my feet. From this ridge the river emerged into a smiling prairie, and, descending to the bank for water, we were joined by Benoist. The rest of the party were out of sight, having taken

a more inland route. We crossed the river repeatedly—sometimes able to ford it, and sometimes swimming—climbed over the ridges of two more cañons, and towards evening reached the cut, which we here named the Hot Spring Gate. On our previous visit in July, we had not entered this pass, reserving it for our descent in the boat; and when we entered it this evening, Mr. Preuss was a few hundred feet in advance. Heated with the long march, he came suddenly upon a fine bold spring gushing from the rock, about ten feet above the river. Eager to enjoy the crystal water, he threw himself down for a hasty draught, and took a mouthful of water almost boiling hot. He said nothing to Benoist, who laid himself down to drink; but the steam from the water arrested his eagerness, and he escaped the hot draught. We had no thermometer to ascertain the temperature, but I could hold my hand in the water just long enough to count two seconds. There are eight or ten of these springs, discharging themselves by streams large enough to be called runs. A loud hollow noise was heard from the rock, which I supposed to be produced by the fall of the water. The strata immediately where they issue is a fine white and calcareous sandstone, covered with an incrustation of common salt. Leaving this Thermopylæ of the West, in a short walk we reached the red ridge which has been

described as lying just above Goat Island. Ascending this, we found some fresh tracks and a button, which showed that the other men had already arrived. A shout from the man who first reached the top of the ridge, responded to from below, informed us that our friends were all on the island; and we were soon among them. We found some pieces of buffalo standing around the fire for us, and managed to get some dry clothes among the people. A sudden storm of rain drove us into the best shelter we could find, where we slept soundly, after one of the most fatiguing days I have ever experienced."

A week afterwards, at a point of course much lower down, another attempt was made to sur-vey the river, which is thus described :—

"At this place I had determined to make another attempt to descend the Platte by water, and accordingly spent two days in the construction of a bull-boat. Men were sent out on the evening of our arrival, the necessary number of bulls killed, and their skins brought to the camp. Four of the best of them were strongly sewed together with buffalo sinew, and stretched over a basket frame of willow. The seams were then covered with ashes and tallow, and the boat left exposed to the sun for the greater part of one day, which was sufficient to dry and contract the skin, and make the whole work solid

and strong. It had a rounded bow, was eight feet long and five broad, and drew with four men about four inches water. On the morning of the 15th we embarked in our hide-boat, Mr. Preuss and myself, with two men. We dragged her over the sands for three or four miles, and then left her on a bar, and abandoned entirely all further attempts to navigate this river. The names given by the Indians are always remarkably appropriate; and certainly none was ever more so than that which they have given to this stream—‘The Nebraska, or Shallow River.’ Walking steadily the remainder of the day, a little before dark we overtook our people at their evening camp, about twenty-one miles below the junction. The next morning we crossed the Platte, and continued our way down the river bottom on the left bank, where we found an excellent, plainly beaten road.”

On the morning of October 1, the cow-bells were heard at the break of day on the Missourian farms. St. Louis was reached on the 17th, and Lieut. Fremont reported himself to the chief of his corps at the city of Washington on the 23d of October.

## CHAPTER III.

SECOND EXPEDITION—KANSAS—SALT LAKE—COLUMBIA RIVER—CENTRAL BASIN—SIERRA NEVADA—CALIFORNIA—KIT CARSON—WAHSATCH MOUNTAINS—THREE PARKS.

EARLY in the spring of 1843, Mr. Fremont started on his Second Expedition. His instructions were to connect his explorations of the preceding year with the surveys of Commander Wilkes on the coast of the Pacific, so as to give a connected view of the great interior tracts of the continent.

The party was placed in a state of final preparation for its long march at the town of Kansas, near the junction of the river of that name with the Missouri. Mr. Thomas Fitzpatrick, whom an experience of many years' hardship and exposure in the western regions fitted for the post, was selected as guide, and proved of invaluable service in all respects and at all times. Mr. Charles Preuss was attached to the expedition in the same capacity as in the former one. Mr. Theodore Talbot, of Washington City, and



Mr. Frederick Dwight, of Massachusetts, accompanied the party. Jacob Dodson, a free young colored man of Washington City, who volunteered for the service, was found most useful and worthy of confidence, in all the perils and trials of the journey to its end. L. Maxwell, who had accompanied the former expedition, and was on his way to Taos, joined the party at Kansas. Two Delaware Indians—a fine-looking old man and his son—were engaged as hunters. There were thirty-two men in the body of the party, constituting in all forty persons besides the commander. They were generally armed with Hall's carbines, and took with them a brass twelve-pound howitzer. The hunters and Delawares had rifles. The camp equipage and provisions were transported in twelve carts, drawn each by two mules; and a light, covered spring-wagon, well mounted, carried the instruments.

The expedition started on the morning of the 29th of May. A few days afterwards Mr. Gilpin, of Missouri, joined it. Its route was along the line of the Kansas, to the mouth of the Republican Fork, which it followed some distance, and thence across the country to St. Vrain's Fort, on the south fork of the Platte, which it reached on the 4th of July. On the 6th it left St. Vrain's, and continued on up the Platte. On the 10th, snow fell heavily during the night on the mountains, and in the morning Pike's Peak

was covered, from the summit as far down as it was visible, with glittering white, giving it a luminous and grand appearance. On the 14th the party reached the point where the Boiling Spring River enters the Arkansas. Here Fremont was delighted to meet and again secure the services of Kit Carson. Having discovered that it would not be possible to obtain supplies from Taos, he determined, without delay, to return to St. Vrain's, having first despatched Carson to procure, if possible, a reinforcement of mules from Mr. Charles Bent, whose post was about seventy-five miles lower down on the Arkansas, and rejoin him at St. Vrain's. On the 16th the party resumed its journey up the Boiling Spring River, so called in consequence of some very remarkable springs, which Mr. Fremont visited the next day, and describes as follows:—

“Leaving the camp to follow slowly, I rode ahead in the afternoon in search of the springs. In the mean time the clouds, which had been gathered all the afternoon over the mountains, began to roll down their sides; and a storm so violent burst upon me that it appeared I had entered the storehouse of the thunder-storms. I continued, however, to ride along up the river until about sunset, and was beginning to be doubtful of finding the springs before the next day, when I came suddenly upon a large smooth

rock about twenty yards in diameter, where the water from several springs was bubbling and boiling up in the midst of a white incrustation with which it had covered a portion of the rock. As this did not correspond with a description given me by the hunters, I did not stop to taste the water, but, dismounting, walked a little way up the river, and, passing through a narrow thicket of shrubbery bordering the stream, stepped directly upon a huge white rock, at the foot of which the river, already become a torrent, foamed along, broken by a small fall. A deer which had been drinking at the spring was startled by my approach, and, springing across the river, bounded off up the mountain. In the upper part of the rock, which had apparently been formed by deposition, was a beautiful white basin, overhung by currant-bushes, in which the cold, clear water bubbled up, kept in constant motion by the escaping gas, and overflowing the rock which it had almost entirely covered with a smooth crust of glistening white. I had all day refrained from drinking, reserving myself for the spring ; and as I could not well be more wet than the rain had already made me, I lay down by the side of the basin, and drank heartily of the delightful water.

The water has a very agreeable taste, which Mr. Preuss found very much to resemble that of the famous Selter Springs in the grand-duchy of Nassau, a country famous for wine and mineral

waters; and it is almost entirely of the same character, though still more agreeable than that of the famous Bear Springs, near Bear River of the Great Salt Lake. The following is an analysis of an incrustation with which the water had covered a piece of wood lying on the rock:—

Carbonate of lime . . . . .	92.25
Carbonate of magnesia . . . . .	1.21
Sulphate of lime	} . . . . .23
Chloride of calcium	
Chloride of magnesia	
Silica . . . . .	1.50
Vegetable matter . . . . .	.20
Moisture and loss . . . . .	4.61
	<hr/> 100.00

“*July 20.* We continued our march up the stream along a green sloping bottom, between pine hills on the one hand, and the main Black Hills on the other, towards the ridge which separates the waters of the Platte from those of the Arkansas. As we approached the dividing ridge, the whole valley was radiant with flowers; blue, yellow, pink, white, scarlet, and purple vied with each other in splendor. *Espargette* was one of the highly characteristic plants, and a bright-looking flower (*gaillardia aristata*) was very frequent; but the most abundant plant along our road to-day was *geranium maculatum*, which is the characteristic plant on this portion of the

dividing grounds. Crossing to the waters of the Platte, fields of blue flax added to the magnificence of this mountain garden; this was occasionally four feet in height, which was a luxuriance of growth that I rarely saw this almost universal plant attain throughout the journey."

Mr. Fitzpatrick had been left behind a month before, to follow on with twenty-five men, and the heavier baggage of the expedition.

"Reaching St. Vrain's Fort on the morning of the 23d, we found Mr. Fitzpatrick and his party in good order and excellent health, and my true and reliable friend, Kit Carson, who had brought with him ten good mules with the necessary pack-saddles. Mr. Fitzpatrick, who had often endured every extremity of want during the course of his mountain life, and knew well the value of provisions in this country, had watched over our stock with jealous vigilance, and there was an abundance of flour, rice, sugar, and coffee in the camp; and again we fared luxuriously. Meat was, however, very scarce; and two very small pigs, which we obtained at the fort, did not go far among forty men. Mr. Fitzpatrick had been here a week, during which time his men had been occupied in refitting the camp; and the repose had been very beneficial to his animals, which were now in tolerably good condition.

"I had been able to obtain no certain information in regard to the character of the passes in



this portion of the Rocky Mountain range, which had always been represented as impracticable for carriages, but the exploration of which was incidentally contemplated by my instructions, with the view of finding some convenient point of passage for the road of emigration, which would enable it to reach, on a more direct line, the usual ford of the Great Colorado—a place considered as determined by the nature of the country beyond that river. It is singular, that, immediately at the foot of the mountains, I could find no one sufficiently acquainted with them to guide us to the plains at their western base; but the race of trappers who formerly lived in their recesses has almost entirely disappeared—dwindled to a few scattered individuals—some one or two of whom are regularly killed in the course of each year by the Indians. You will remember that, in the previous year, I brought with me to their village near this post, and hospitably treated on the way, several Cheyenne Indians, whom I had met on the Lower Platte. Shortly after their arrival here, they were out with a party of Indians, (themselves the principal men,) which discovered a few trappers in the neighboring mountains, whom they immediately murdered, although one of them had been nearly thirty years in the country, and was perfectly well known, as he had grown gray among them.”



Having determined to traverse the eastern side of the Medicine Bow Mountains to find, if possible, a pass through them, Mr. Fremont again divided his party, sending Fitzpatrick with a large portion of it to the mouth of the Laramie, and thence by the usual emigrant route to Fort Hall, there to await his arrival.

“Our Delaware Indians having determined to return to their homes, it became necessary to provide this party with a good hunter; and I accordingly engaged in that capacity Alexander Godey, a young man about twenty-five years of age, who had been in this country six or seven years, all of which time had been actively employed in hunting for the support of the posts, or in solitary trading expeditions among the Indians. In courage and professional skill he was a formidable rival to Carson, and constantly afterwards was among the best and most efficient of the party, and in difficult situations was of incalculable value.

“For my own party I selected the following men, a number of whom old associations rendered agreeable to me:—

“Charles Preuss, Christopher Carson, Basil Lajeunesse, François Badeau, J. B. Bernier, Louis Menard, Raphael Proue, Jacob Dodson, Louis Zindel, Henry Lee, J. B. Derosier, François Lajeunesse, and Auguste Vasquez.”

Going through what is called the Medicine

Butte Pass, Fremont followed the Platte and Sweetwater, and crossed the dividing ridge, along the southern border of the South Pass, which is about twenty miles in width. He then directed his course towards Bear River, a tributary of the Great Salt Lake on the north. Many of his animals died during this part of the tour, and it was not accomplished without considerable difficulty and hardship.

On the 21st of August, they reached the fertile and picturesque valley of Bear River, the principal tributary of the Great Salt Lake.

“We were now entering a region which, for us, possessed a strange and extraordinary interest. We were upon the waters of the famous lake which forms a salient point among the remarkable geographical features of the country, and around which the vague and superstitious accounts of the trappers had thrown a delightful obscurity, which we anticipated pleasure in dispelling, but which, in the mean time, left a crowded field for the exercise of our imagination.

“In our occasional conversations with the few old hunters who had visited the region, it had been a subject of frequent speculation; and the wonders which they related were not the less agreeable because they were highly exaggerated and impossible.

“Hitherto this lake had been seen only by trap-

pers, who were wandering through the country in search of new beaver streams, caring very little for geography; its islands had never been visited; and none were to be found who had entirely made the circuit of its shores; and no instrumental observations, or geographical survey of any description, had ever been made anywhere in the neighboring region. It was generally supposed that it had no visible outlet; but among the trappers, including those in my own camp, were many who believed that somewhere on its surface was a terrible whirlpool, through which its waters found their way to the ocean by some subterranean communication. All these things had made a frequent subject of discussion in our desultory conversations around the fires at night; and my own mind had become tolerably well filled with their indefinite pictures, and insensibly colored with their romantic descriptions, which, in the pleasure of excitement, I was well disposed to believe, and half expected to realize.

“In about six miles’ travel from our encampment, we reached one of the points in our journey to which we had always looked forward with great interest—the famous Beer Springs, which, on account of the effervescing gas and acid taste, had received their name from the voyageurs and trappers of the country, who, in the midst of their rude and hard lives, are fond

of finding some fancied resemblance to the luxuries they rarely have the good fortune to enjoy.

“Although somewhat disappointed in the expectations which various descriptions had led me to form of unusual beauty of situation and scenery, I found it altogether a place of very great interest; and a traveller for the first time in a volcanic region remains in a constant excitement, and at every step is arrested by something remarkable and new. There is a confusion of interesting objects gathered together in a small space. Around the place of encampment the Beer Springs were numerous; but, as far as we could ascertain, were entirely confined to that locality in the bottom. In the bed of the river, in front, for a space of several hundred yards, they were very abundant; the effervescing gas rising up and agitating the water in countless bubbling columns. In the vicinity round about were numerous springs of an entirely different and equally marked mineral character. In a rather picturesque spot, about 1,300 yards below our encampment, and immediately on the river bank, is the most remarkable spring of the place. In an opening on the rock, a white column of scattered water is thrown up, in form like a *jet-d'eau*, to a variable height of about three feet, and, though it is maintained in a constant supply, its greatest height is attained

only at regular intervals, according to the action of the force below. It is accompanied by a subterranean noise, which, together with the motion of the water, makes very much the impression of a steamboat in motion; and, without knowing that it had been already previously so called, we gave to it the name of the Steamboat Spring. The rock through which it is forced is slightly raised in a convex manner, and gathered at the opening into an urn-mouthed form, and is evidently formed by continued deposition from the water, and colored bright red by oxide of iron.

“It is a hot spring, and the water has a pungent and disagreeable metallic taste, leaving a burning effect on the tongue. Within perhaps two yards of the *jet-d'eau*, is a small hole of about an inch in diameter, through which, at regular intervals, escapes a blast of hot air with a light wreath of smoke, accompanied by a regular noise.”

As they approached the lake they passed over a country of bold and striking scenery, and through several “gates,” as they called certain narrow valleys. The “standing rock” is a huge column, occupying the centre of one of these passes. It fell from a height of perhaps 3,000 feet, and happened to remain in its present upright position.

At last, on the 6th of September, the object



for which their eyes had long been straining, was brought to view.

“*Sept. 6.* This time we reached the butte without any difficulty; and, ascending to the summit, immediately at our feet beheld the object of our anxious search, the waters of the Inland Sea, stretching in still and solitary grandeur far beyond the limit of our vision. It was one of the great points of the exploration; and as we looked eagerly over the lake in the first emotions of excited pleasure, I am doubtful if the followers of Balboa felt more enthusiasm when, from the heights of the Andes, they saw for the first time the great Western Ocean. It was certainly a magnificent object, and a noble *terminus* to this part of our expedition; and to travellers so long shut up among mountain ranges, a sudden view over the expanse of silent waters had in it something sublime. Several large islands raised their high rocky heads out of the waves; but whether or not they were timbered was still left to our imagination, as the distance was too great to determine if the dark hues upon them were woodland or naked rock. During the day the clouds had been gathering black over the mountains to the westward, and while we were looking a storm burst down with sudden fury upon the lake, and entirely hid the islands from our view.

“On the edge of the stream a favorable spot



was selected in a grove ; and, felling the timber, we made a strong *corál*, or horse-pen, for the animals, and a little fort for the people who were to remain. We were now probably in the country of the Utah Indians, though none reside upon the lake. The India-rubber boat was repaired with prepared cloth and gum, and filled with air, in readiness for the next day.

“The provisions which Carson had brought with him being now exhausted, and our stock reduced to a small quantity of roots, I determined to retain with me only a sufficient number of men for the execution of our design ; and accordingly seven were sent back to Fort Hall, under the guidance of François Lajeunesse, who, having been for many years a trapper in the country, was an experienced mountaineer.

“We formed now but a small family. With Mr. Preuss and myself, Carson, Bernier, and Basil Lajeunesse had been selected for the boat expedition—the first ever attempted on this interior sea ; and Badeau, with Derosier, and Jacob, (the colored man,) were to be left in charge of the camp. We were favored with most delightful weather. To-night there was a brilliant sunset of golden orange and green, which left the western sky clear and beautifully pure ; but clouds in the east made me lose an occultation. The summer frogs were singing around us, and the evening was very pleasant, with a tempera-





ture of 60°—a night of a more southern autumn. For our supper we had *yampah*, the most agreeably flavored of the roots, seasoned by a small fat duck, which had come in the way of Jacob's rifle. Around our fire to-night were many speculations on what to-morrow would bring forth; and in our busy conjectures we fancied that we should find every one of the large islands a tangled wilderness of trees and shrubbery, teeming with game of every description that the neighboring region afforded, and which the foot of a white man or Indian had never violated. Frequently, during the day, clouds had rested on the summits of their lofty mountains, and we believed that we should find clear streams and springs of fresh water; and we indulged in anticipations of the luxurious répast with which we were to indemnify ourselves for past privations. Neither, in our discussions, were the whirlpool and other mysterious dangers forgotten, which Indian and hunters' stories attributed to this unexplored lake. The men had discovered that, instead of being strongly sewed, (like that of the preceding year, which had so triumphantly rode the cañons of the Upper Great Platte,) our present boat was only pasted together in a very insecure manner, the maker having been allowed so little time in the construction that he was obliged to crowd the labor of two months into several days. The insecurity of the boat

was sensibly felt by us; and, mingled with the enthusiasm and excitement that we all felt at the prospect of an undertaking which had never before been accomplished, was a certain impression of danger, sufficient to give a serious character to our conversation. The momentary view which had been had of the lake the day before, its great extent and rugged islands, dimly seen amidst the dark waters in the obscurity of the sudden storm, were well calculated to heighten the idea of undefined danger with which the lake was generally associated.

“*Sept. 8.* A calm, clear day, with a sunrise temperature of 41°. In view of our present enterprise, a part of the equipment of the boat had been made to consist of three air-tight bags, about three feet long, and capable each of containing five gallons. These had been filled with water the night before, and were now placed in the boat, with our blankets and instruments, consisting of a sextant, telescope, spy-glass, thermometer, and barometer.

“In the course of the morning we discovered that two of the cylinders leaked so much as to require one man constantly at the bellows, to keep them sufficiently full of air to support the boat. Although we had made a very early start, we loitered so much on the way—stopping every now and then, and floating silently along, to get a shot at a goose or a duck—that it was late in

the day when we reached the outlet. The river here divided into several branches, filled with fluvials, and so very shallow that it was with difficulty we could get the boat along, being obliged to get out and wade. We encamped on a low point among rushes and young willows, where there was a quantity of driftwood, which served for our fires. The evening was mild and clear; we made a pleasant bed of the young willows; and geese and ducks enough had been killed for an abundant supper at night, and for breakfast next morning. The stillness of the night was enlivened by millions of water-fowl.

“*September 9.* The day was clear and calm; the thermometer at sunrise at 49°. As is usual with the trappers on the eve of any enterprise, our people had made dreams, and theirs happened to be a bad one—one which always preceded evil—and consequently they looked very gloomy this morning; but we hurried through our breakfast, in order to make an early start, and have all the day before us for our adventure. The channel in a short distance became so shallow that our navigation was at an end, being merely a sheet of soft mud, with a few inches of water, and sometimes none at all, forming the low-water shore of the lake. All this place was absolutely covered with flocks of screaming plover. We took off our clothes, and, getting overboard, commenced dragging the boat—mak-



ing, by this operation, a very curious trail, and a very disagreeable smell in stirring up the mud, as we sank above the knee at every step. The water here was still fresh, with only an insipid and disagreeable taste, probably derived from the bed of fetid mud. After proceeding in this way about a mile, we came to a small black ridge on the bottom, beyond which the water became suddenly salt, beginning gradually to deepen, and the bottom was sandy and firm. It was a remarkable division, separating the fresh water of the rivers from the briny water of the lake, which was entirely *saturated* with common salt. Pushing our little vessel across the narrow boundary, we sprang on board, and at length were afloat on the waters of the unknown sea.

“ We did not steer for the mountainous islands, but directed our course towards a lower one, which it had been decided we should first visit, the summit of which was formed like the crater at the upper end of Bear River valley. So long as we could touch the bottom with our paddles, we were very gay; but gradually, as the water deepened, we became more still in our frail batteau of gum cloth distended with air, and with pasted seams. Although the day was very calm, there was a considerable swell on the lake; and there were white patches of foam on the surface, which were slowly moving to the southward, indicating the set of a current in that

direction, and recalling the recollection of the whirlpool stories. The water continued to deepen as we advanced; the lake becoming almost transparently clear, of an extremely beautiful bright-green color; and the spray, which was thrown into the boat and over our clothes, was directly converted into a crust of common salt, which covered also our hands and arms. ‘Captain,’ said Carson, who for some time had been looking suspiciously at some whitening appearances outside the nearest islands, ‘what are those yonder?—won’t you just take a look with the glass?’ We ceased paddling for a moment, and found them to be the caps of the waves that were beginning to break under the force of a strong breeze that was coming up the lake. The form of the boat seemed to be an admirable one, and it rode on the waves like a water bird; but, at the same time, it was extremely slow in its progress. When we were a little more than half-way across the reach, two of the divisions between the cylinders gave way, and it required the constant use of the bellows to keep in a sufficient quantity of air. For a long time we scarcely seemed to approach our island, but gradually we worked across the rougher sea of the open channel, into the smoother water under the lee of the island; and began to discover that what we took for a long row of pelicans, ranged on the beach, were only

low cliffs whitened with salt by the spray of the waves; and about noon we reached the shore, the transparency of the water enabling us to see the bottom at a considerable depth.

“ The cliffs and masses of rock along the shore were whitened by an incrustation of salt where the waves dashed up against them; and the evaporating water, which had been left in holes and hollows on the surface of the rocks, was covered with a crust of salt about one eighth of an inch in thickness.

“ Carrying with us the barometer and other instruments, in the afternoon we ascended to the highest point of the island—a bare rocky peak, 800 feet above the lake. Standing on the summit, we enjoyed an extended view of the lake, enclosed in a basin of rugged mountains, which sometimes left marshy flats and extensive bottoms between them and the shore, and in other places came directly down into the water with bold and precipitous bluffs.

“ As we looked over the vast expanse of water spread out beneath us, and strained our eyes along the silent shores over which hung so much doubt and uncertainty, and which were so full of interest to us, I could hardly repress the almost irresistible desire to continue our exploration; but the lengthening snow on the mountains was a plain indication of the advancing season, and our frail linen boat appeared so

insecure that I was unwilling to trust our lives to the uncertainties of the lake. I therefore unwillingly resolved to terminate our survey here, and remain satisfied for the present with what we had been able to add to the unknown geography of the region. We felt pleasure also in remembering that we were the first who, in the traditionary annals of the country, had visited the islands, and broken, with the cheerful sound of human voices, the long solitude of the place.

“I accidentally left on the summit the brass cover to the object end of my spy-glass; and as it will probably remain there undisturbed by Indians, it will furnish matter of speculation to some future traveller. In our excursions about the island, we did not meet with any kind of animal; a magpie, and another larger bird, probably attracted by the smoke of our fire, paid us a visit from the shore, and were the only living things seen during our stay. The rock constituting the cliffs along the shore where we were encamped, is a talcous rock, or steatite, with brown spar.

“At sunset, the temperature was  $70^{\circ}$ . We had arrived just in time to obtain a meridian altitude of the sun, and other observations were obtained this evening, which place our camp in latitude  $41^{\circ} 10' 42''$ , and longitude  $112^{\circ} 21' 05''$  from Greenwich. From a discussion of the

barometrical observations made during our stay on the shores of the lake, we have adopted 4,200 feet for its elevation above the gulf of Mexico. In the first disappointment we felt from the dissipation of our dream of the fertile islands, I called this Disappointment Island.

“ Out of the driftwood, we made ourselves pleasant little lodges, open to the water, and, after having kindled large fires to excite the wonder of any straggling savage on the lake shores, lay down, for the first time in a long journey, in perfect security; no one thinking about his arms. The evening was extremely bright and pleasant; but the wind rose during the night, and the waves began to break heavily on the shore, making our island tremble. I had not expected in our inland journey to hear the roar of an ocean surf; and the strangeness of our situation, and the excitement we felt in the associated interests of the place, made this one of the most interesting nights I remember during our long expedition.

“ In the morning, the surf was breaking heavily on the shore, and we were up early. The lake was dark and agitated, and we hurried through our scanty breakfast, and embarked—having first filled one of the buckets with water from the lake, of which it was intended to make salt. The sun had risen by the time we were ready to start; and it was blowing a strong gale of



wind, almost directly off the shore, and raising a considerable sea, in which our boat strained very much. It roughened as we got away from the island, and it required all the efforts of the men to make any head against the wind and sea; the gale rising with the sun; and there was danger of being blown into one of the open reaches beyond the island. At the distance of half a mile from the beach, the depth of water was 16 feet, with a clay bottom; but, as the working of the boat was very severe labor, and during the operation of rounding it was necessary to cease paddling, during which the boat lost considerable way, I was unwilling to discourage the men, and reluctantly gave up my intention of ascertaining the depth, and the character of the bed. There was a general shout in the boat when we found ourselves in one fathom, and we soon after landed."

On the afternoon of the 12th they started from their Salt Lake encampment, for the Columbia River, and reached Fort Hall on the 18th, at sunset. Here the party was again united, and preparations were made to push on to the Columbia.

"The early approach of winter, and the difficulty of supporting a large party, determined me to send back a number of the men who had become satisfied that they were not fitted for the laborious service and frequent privation to



which they were necessarily exposed, and which there was reason to believe would become more severe in the further extension of the voyage. I accordingly called them together, and, informing them of my intention to continue our journey during the ensuing winter, in the course of which they would probably be exposed to considerable hardship, succeeded in prevailing upon a number of them to return voluntarily. These were : Charles De Forrest, Henry Lee, J. Campbell, Wm. Creuss, A. Vasquez, A. Pera, Patrick White, B. Tesson, M. Creely, François Lajeunesse, Basil Lajeunesse. Among these, I regretted very much to lose Basil Lajeunesse, one of the best men in my party, who was obliged, by the condition of his family, to be at home in the coming winter."

Fremont, with the residue of his party, started on the 23d of September, and pursued, for the most part, the course of the Snake River, or Lewis's Fork, and came in sight of the Columbia on the 25th of October, at the junction of the Wahlahwahlah, where it was twelve hundred yards wide. On the 4th of November they reached the Dalles of the Columbia, so called from the trough-like aspect of the narrow chasm, at one place only fifty-eight yards wide, through which the great river passes between perpendicular walls of basaltic rock of an average height of twenty-five feet. From the Dalles to Fort

Vancouver the route was pursued in a canoe. Fremont, Preuss, Bernier, and Dodson, with three Indians to whom the canoe belonged, constituting the party. The remainder were left in charge of Carson.

After collecting at the fort the necessary provisions and supplies to refit and support his party during the winter journey on which they were about to enter,—in which he was aided by the cordial coöperation of Dr. McLaughlin, the executive officer of the Hudson Bay Company,—he started on his return to the Dalles in the afternoon of November 10, his flotilla consisting of a Mackinaw barge and three canoes.

“*November 13.* We had a day of disagreeable and cold rain, and late in the afternoon began to approach the rapids of the cascades.

“The current was now very swift, and we were obliged to *cordelle* the boat along the left shore, where the bank was covered with large masses of rocks. Night overtook us at the upper end of the island, a short distance below the cascades, and we halted on the open point. In the mean time, the lighter canoes, paddled altogether by Indians, had passed ahead, and were out of sight. With them was the lodge, which was the only shelter we had, with most of the bedding and provisions. We shouted, and fired guns, but all to no purpose, as it was impossible for

them to hear above the roar of the river ; and we remained all night without shelter, the rain pouring down all the time. The old voyageurs did not appear to mind it much, but covered themselves up as well as they could, and lay down on the sand-beach, where they remained quiet until morning. The rest of us spent a rather miserable night ; and, to add to our discomfort, the incessant rain extinguished our fires ; and we were glad when at last daylight appeared, and we again embarked.

“ Crossing to the right bank, we *cordelled* the boat along the shore, there being no longer any use for the paddles, and put into a little bay below the upper rapids. Here we found the lodge pitched, and about twenty Indians sitting around a blazing fire within, making a luxurious breakfast with salmon, bread, butter, sugar, coffee, and other provisions. In the forest, on the edge of the high bluff overlooking the river, is an Indian graveyard, consisting of a collection of tombs, in each of which were the scattered bones of many skeletons. The tombs were made of boards, which were ornamented with many figures of men and animals of the natural size,—from their appearance constituting the armorial device by which, among Indians, the chiefs are usually known.

“ The masses of rock displayed along the shores of the ravine in the neighborhood of the cas-

ades, are clearly volcanic products. Between this cove, which I called Graveyard Bay, and another spot of smooth water above on the right called Lüders Bay, sheltered by a jutting point of huge rocky masses at the foot of the cascades, the shore along the intervening rapids is lined with precipices of distinct strata of red and variously colored lavas in inclined positions.

“A gentleman named Lüders, a botanist, from the city of Hamburg, arrived at the bay I have called by his name while we were occupied in bringing up the boats. I was delighted to meet at such a place a man of kindred pursuits; but we had only the pleasure of a brief conversation, as his canoe, under the guidance of two Indians, was about to run the rapids; and I could not enjoy the satisfaction of regaling him with a breakfast which, after his recent journey, would have been an extraordinary luxury. All of his few instruments and baggage were in the canoe, and he hurried around by land to meet it at the Graveyard Bay; but he was scarcely out of sight, when, by the carelessness of the Indians, the boat was drawn into the midst of the rapids, and glanced down the river, bottom up, with the loss of every thing it contained. In the natural concern I felt for his misfortune, I gave to the little cove the name of Lüders Bay.

“*November 15.* We continued to-day our work at the portage.”

In the afternoon of Nov. 18, they reached the Dalles. The camp was immediately busy with the last preparations for a journey through the unexplored regions between the Columbia River and California, and embracing the central basin of the continent between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada. It was not originally designed to cross the latter, but to turn homewards over the Rocky Mountains, at some pass near the head waters of the Arkansas.

“ This was our projected line of return—a great part of it absolutely new to geographical, botanical, and geological science—and the subject of reports in relation to lakes, rivers, deserts, and savages hardly above the condition of mere wild animals, which inflamed desire to know what this *terra incognita* really contained. It was a serious enterprise, at the commencement of winter, to undertake the traverse of such a region, and with a party consisting only of twenty-five persons, and they of many nations—American, French, German, Canadian, Indian, and colored—and most of them young, several being under twenty-one years of age. All knew that a strange country was to be explored, and dangers and hardships to be encountered; but no one blenched at the prospect. On the contrary, courage and confidence animated the whole party. Cheerfulness, readiness, subordination, prompt obedience, characterized all; nor did any



extremity of peril and privation, to which we were afterwards exposed, ever belie, or derogate from, the fine spirit of this brave and generous commencement. The course of the narrative will show at what point, and for what reasons, we were prevented from the complete execution of this plan, after having made considerable progress upon it, and how we were forced by desert plains, and mountain ranges, and deep snows, far to the south and near to the Pacific ocean, and along the western base of the Sierra Nevada; where, indeed, a new and ample field of exploration opened itself before us. For the present, we must follow the narrative, which will first lead us south along the valley of Fall River, and the eastern base of the Cascade range, to the Tlamath lake, from which, or its margin, three rivers go in three directions—one west, to the ocean; another north, to the Columbia; the third south, to California.

“For the support of the party, I had provided at Vancouver a supply of provisions for not less than three months, consisting principally of flour, peas, and tallow—the latter being used in cooking; and, in addition to this, I had purchased at the mission some California cattle, which were to be driven on the hoof. We had 104 mules and horses—part of the latter procured from the Indians about the mission; and for the sustenance of which, our reliance was upon the grass which



we should find, and the soft porous wood, which was to be its substitute when there was none.

“ Mr. Perkins succeeded in obtaining as guide to the Tlamath lake two Indians, one of whom had been there, and bore the marks of several wounds he had received from some of the Indians in the neighborhood ; and the other went along for company. In order to enable us to obtain horses, he despatched messengers to the various Indian villages in the neighborhood, informing them that we were desirous to purchase, and appointing a day for them to bring them in.

“ We made, in the mean time, several excursions in the vicinity. Mr. Perkins walked with Mr. Preuss and myself to the heights, about nine miles distant on the opposite side of the river, whence, in fine weather, an extensive view may be had over the mountains, including seven great peaks of the Cascade range ; but clouds, on this occasion, destroyed the anticipated pleasure, and we obtained bearings only to three that were visible—Mount Regnier, St. Helens, and Mount Hood. On the heights, about one mile south of the mission, a very fine view may be had of Mount Hood and St. Helens. In order to determine their positions with as much accuracy as possible, the angular distances of the peaks were measured with the sextant, at different fixed points from which they could be seen.

“ The Indians brought in their horses at the

appointed time, and we succeeded in obtaining a number in exchange for goods; but they were relatively much higher here, where goods are plenty and at moderate prices, than we had found them in the more eastern part of our voyage. Several of the Indians inquired very anxiously to know if we had any *dollars*; and the horses we procured were much fewer in number than I had desired, and of thin, inferior quality; the oldest and poorest being those that were sold to us. These horses, as ever in our journey you will have occasion to remark, are valuable for hardihood and great endurance.

“ *November 24.* At this place one of the men was discharged; and at the request of Mr. Perkins, a Chinook Indian, a lad of nineteen, who was extremely desirous to “see the whites,” and make some acquaintance with our institutions, was received into the party under my especial charge, with the understanding that I would again return him to his friends. He had lived for some time in the household of Mr. Perkins, and spoke a few words of the English language.

“ *November 25.* We were all up early, in the excitement of turning towards home. The stars were brilliant, and the morning cold, the thermometer at daylight 26°.

Our preparations had been finally completed, and to-day we commenced our journey. The little wagon which had hitherto carried the in-

struments, I judged it necessary to abandon; and it was accordingly presented to the mission. In all our long travelling, it had never been overturned or injured by any accident of the road; and the only things broken were the glass lamps, and one of the front panels, which had been kicked out by an unruly Indian horse. The howitzer was the only wheeled carriage now remaining. We started about noon, when the weather had become disagreeably cold, with flurries of snow. Our friend Mr. Perkins, whose kindness had been active and efficient during our stay, accompanied us several miles on our road; when he bade us farewell, and consigned us to the care of our guides.

“*November 27.* A fine view of Mount Hood this morning; a rose-colored mass of snow, bearing S. 85° W. by compass. The sky is clear, and the air cold; the thermometer 2°. 5 below zero; the trees and bushes glittering white, and the rapid stream filled with floating ice.”

No one can have an adequate idea of the sufferings endured, the obstacles encountered, the perilous adventures, and fearful experiences, in this journey, without reading the whole of Fremont's Report, referring from point to point to the geography of the country, as exhibited on the map, drawn from his surveys, by his associate Charles Preuss, in 1848, under an order of the Senate of the United States. Of course, in such

a work as this, only glimpses can be given of what the heroic party went through; and that can best be done in extracts from the Report of its commander.

"*December 14.* Our road was over a broad mountain, and we rode seven hours in a thick snowstorm, always through pine forests, when we came down upon the head waters of another stream, on which there was grass. The snow lay deep on the ground, and only the high swamp grass appeared above. The Indians were thinly clad, and I had remarked during the day that they suffered from the cold. This evening they told me that the snow was getting too deep on the mountain, and I could not induce them to go any further. The stream we had struck issued from the mountain in an easterly direction, turning to the southward a short distance below; and, drawing its course upon the ground, they made us comprehend that it pursued its way for a long distance in that direction, uniting with many other streams, and gradually becoming a great river. Without the subsequent information which confirmed the opinion, we became immediately satisfied that this water formed the principal stream of the *Sacramento* River; and, consequently, that this main affluent of the Bay of San Francisco had its source within the limits of the United States, and opposite a tributary to the Colum-

bia, and near the head of the Tlamath River, which goes to the ocean north of 42°, and within the United States.

*“December 15.* A present consisting of useful goods afforded much satisfaction to our guides ; and, showing them the national flag, I explained that it was a symbol of our nation ; and they engaged always to receive it in a friendly manner. The chief pointed out a course, by following which we would arrive at the big water, where no more snow was to be found. Crossing a hard frozen swamp on the further side of the Rond, we entered again the pine forest, in which very deep snow made our travelling slow and laborious. We were slowly but gradually ascending a mountain ; and, after a hard journey of seven hours, we came to some naked places among the timber, where a few tufts of grass showed above the snow, on the side of a hollow ; and here we encamped. Our cow, which every day got poorer, was killed here, but the meat was rather tough.

*“December 16.* We travelled this morning through snow about three feet deep, which, being crusted, very much cut the feet of our animals. The mountain still gradually rose ; we crossed several spring heads covered with quaking asp, otherwise it was all pine forest. The air was dark with falling snow, which everywhere weighed down the trees. The depths of



the forest were profoundly still ; and below, we scarce felt a breath of the wind which whirled the snow through their branches. I found that it required some exertion of constancy to adhere steadily to one course through the woods, when we were uncertain how far the forest extended, or what lay beyond ; and, on account of our animals, it would be bad to spend another night on the mountain. Towards noon the forest looked clear ahead, appearing suddenly to terminate ; and beyond a certain point we could see no trees. Riding rapidly ahead to this spot, we found ourselves on the verge of a vertical and rocky wall of the mountain. At our feet—more than a thousand feet below—we looked into a green prairie country, in which a beautiful lake, some twenty miles in length, was spread along the foot of the mountains, its shores bordered with green grass. Just then the sun broke out among the clouds, and illuminated the country below, while around us the storm raged fiercely. Not a particle of ice was to be seen on the lake, or snow on its borders, and all was like summer or spring. The glow of the sun in the valley below brightened up our hearts with sudden pleasure ; and we made the woods ring with joyful shouts to those behind ; and gradually, as each came up, he stopped to enjoy the unexpected scene. Shivering on snow three feet deep, and stiffening in a cold



north wind, we exclaimed at once that the names of Summer Lake and Winter Ridge should be applied to these two proximate places of such sudden and violent contrast.

“ We were now immediately on the verge of the forest land, in which we had been travelling so many days ; and looking forward to the east, scarce a tree was to be seen. Viewed from our elevation, the face of the country exhibited only rocks and grass, and presented a region in which the *artemisia* became the principal wood, furnishing to its scattered inhabitants fuel for their fires, building material for their huts, and shelter for the small game which ministers to their hunger and nakedness. Broadly marked by the boundary of the mountain wall, and immediately below us, were the first waters of that Great Interior Basin which has the Wahsatch and Bear River mountains for its eastern, and the Sierra Nevada for its western rim ; and the edge of which we had entered upwards of three months before at the Great Salt Lake.

“ When we had sufficiently admired the scene below, we began to think about descending, which here was impossible, and we turned towards the north, travelling always along the rocky wall. We continued on for four or five miles, making ineffectual attempts at several places ; and at length succeeded in getting down at one which was extremely difficult of



Thamath Lake



descent. Night had closed in before the foremost had reached the bottom, and it was dark before we all found ourselves together in the valley. There were three or four half-dead dry cedar-trees on the shore, and those who first arrived kindled bright fires to light on the others. One of the mules rolled over and over two or three hundred feet into a ravine, but recovered himself, without any other injury than to his pack; and the howitzer was left midway the mountain until morning.

"*January 10.* We continued our reconnoissance ahead, pursuing a south direction in the basin along the ridge; the camp following slowly after. On a large trail there is never any doubt of finding suitable places for encampments. We reached the end of the basin, where we found, in a hollow of the mountain which enclosed it, an abundance of good bunch grass. Leaving a signal for the party to encamp, we continued our way up the hollow, intending to see what lay beyond the mountain. The hollow was several miles long, forming a good pass, the snow deepening to about a foot as we neared the summit. Beyond, a defile between the mountains descended rapidly about two thousand feet; and, filling up all the lower space, was a sheet of green water, some twenty miles broad. It broke upon our eyes like the ocean. The neighboring peaks rose high above us, and

we ascended one of them to obtain a better view. The waves were curling in the breeze, and their dark-green color showed it to be a body of deep water. For a long time we sat enjoying the view, for we had become fatigued with mountains, and the free expanse of moving waves was very grateful. It was set in the midst of the mountains, which, from our position, seemed to enclose it almost entirely. At the western end it communicated with the line of basins we had left a few days since; and on the opposite side it swept a ridge of snowy mountains, the foot of the Great Sierra. Its position at first inclined us to believe it Mary's Lake, but the rugged mountains were so entirely discordant with descriptions of its low rushy shores and open country, that we concluded it some unknown body of water; which it afterwards proved to be.

"Towards evening the snow began to fall heavily, and the country had a wintry appearance.

"The next morning the snow was rapidly melting under a warm sun. Part of the morning was occupied in bringing up the gun; and, making only nine miles, we encamped on the shore, opposite a very remarkable rock in the lake, which had attracted our attention for many miles. It rose, according to our estimate, 600 feet above the water; and, from the point we



viewed it, presented a pretty exact outline of the great pyramid of Cheops. Like other rocks along the shore, it seemed to be incrustated with calcareous cement. This striking feature suggested a name for the lake; and I called it Pyramid Lake.

“*January 29.* The other division of the party did not come in to-night, but encamped in the upper meadow, and arrived the next morning. They had not succeeded in getting the howitzer beyond the place mentioned, and where it had been left by Mr. Preuss in obedience to my orders; and, in anticipation of the snow-banks and snow-fields still ahead, foreseeing the inevitable detention to which it would subject us, I reluctantly determined to leave it there for the time. It was of the kind invented by the French for the mountain part of their war in Algiers; and the distance it had come with us, proved how well it was adapted to its purpose. We left it, to the great sorrow of the whole party, who were grieved to part with a companion which had made the whole distance from St. Louis, and commanded respect for us on some critical occasions, and which might be needed for the same purpose again.

“*February 2.* It had ceased snowing, and this morning the lower air was clear and frosty; and six or seven thousand feet above, the peaks of the Sierra now and then appeared among the



rolling clouds, which were rapidly dispersing before the sun. Our Indian shook his head as he pointed to the icy pinnacles shooting high up into the sky, and seeming almost immediately above us. Crossing the river on the ice, and leaving it immediately, we commenced the ascent of the mountain along the valley of a tributary stream. The people were unusually silent; for every man knew that our enterprise was hazardous, and the issue doubtful.

“The snow deepened rapidly, and it soon became necessary to break a road. For this service, a party of ten was formed, mounted on the strongest horses; each man in succession opening the road on foot, or on horseback, until himself and his horse became fatigued, when he stepped aside; and, the remaining number passing ahead, he took his station in the rear. Leaving this stream, and pursuing a very direct course, we passed over an intervening ridge to the river we had left. On the way we passed two low huts entirely covered with snow, which might very easily have escaped observation. A family was living in each; and the only trail I saw in the neighborhood was from the door-hole to a nut-pine tree near, which supplied them with food and fuel. We found two similar huts on the creek where we next arrived; and, travelling a little higher up, encamped on its banks in about four feet depth of snow. Carson found

near an open hill-side, where the wind and the sun had melted the snow, leaving exposed sufficient bunch grass for the animals to-night.

“*February 4.* I went ahead early with two or three men, each with a led horse, to break the road. We were obliged to abandon the hollow entirely, and work along the mountain-side, which was very steep, and the snow covered with an icy crust. We cut a footing as we advanced, and trampled a road through for the animals; but occasionally one plunged outside the trail, and slid along the field to the bottom, a hundred yards below. Late in the day we reached another bench in the hollow, where, in summer, the stream passed over a small precipice. Here was a short distance of dividing ground between the two ridges, and beyond an open basin, some ten miles across, whose bottom presented a field of snow. At the further or western side rose the middle crest of the mountain, a dark-looking ridge of volcanic rock.

“The summit line presented a range of naked peaks, apparently destitute of snow and vegetation; but below, the face of the whole country was covered with timber of extraordinary size.

“Towards a pass which the guide indicated here, we attempted in the afternoon to force a road; but after a laborious plunging through two or three hundred yards, our best horses gave out, entirely refusing to make any further effort; and,

for the time, we were brought to a stand. The guide informed us that we were entering the deep snow, and here began the difficulties of the mountain; and to him, and almost to all, our enterprise seemed hopeless. I returned a short distance back, to the break in the hollow, where I met Mr. Fitzpatrick.

“The camp had been all the day occupied in endeavoring to ascend the hill, but only the best horses had succeeded. The animals generally not having sufficient strength to bring themselves up without the packs; and all the line of road between this and the springs was strewed with camp stores and equipage, and horses floundering in snow. I therefore immediately encamped on the ground with my own mess, which was in advance, and directed Mr. Fitzpatrick to encamp at the springs, and send all the animals in charge of Tabeau, with a strong guard, back to the place where they had been pastured the night before. Here was a small spot of level ground, protected on one side by the mountain and on the other sheltered by a little ridge of rock. It was an open grove of pines, which assimilated in size to the grandeur of the mountain, being frequently six feet in diameter.

“To-night we had no shelter, but we made a large fire around the trunk of one of the huge pines; and covering the snow with small boughs, on which we spread our blankets, soon made

ourselves comfortable. The night was very bright and clear, though the thermometer was only at 10°. A strong wind, which sprang up at sundown, made it intensely cold; and this was one of the bitterest nights during the journey.

“Two Indians joined our party here; and one of them, an old man, immediately began to harangue us, saying that ourselves and animals would perish in the snow, and that if we would go back, he would show us another and a better way across the mountain. He spoke in a very loud voice, and there was a singular repetition of phrases and arrangement of words, which rendered his speech striking and not unmusical.

“We had now begun to understand some words, and, with the aid of signs, easily comprehended the old man’s simple ideas. ‘Rock upon rock—rock upon rock—snow upon snow—snow upon snow,’ said he; ‘even if you get over the snow, you will not be able to get down from the mountains.’ He made us the sign of precipices, and showed us how the feet of the horses would slip, and throw them off from the narrow trails which led along their sides. Our Chinook, who comprehended even more readily than ourselves, and believed our situation hopeless, covered his head with his blanket, and began to weep and lament. ‘I wanted to see the whites,’ said he; ‘I came away from my own

people to see the whites, and I wouldn't care to die among them; but here'——and he looked around into the cold night and gloomy forest, and, drawing his blanket over his head, began again to lament.

“Seated around the tree, the fire illuminating the rocks and the tall bolls of the pines round about, and the old Indian haranguing, we presented a group of very serious faces.

“*February 5.* The night had been too cold to sleep, and we were up very early. Our guide was standing by the fire with all his finery on; and, seeing him shiver in the cold, I threw on his shoulders one of my blankets. We missed him a few minutes afterwards, and never saw him again. He had deserted.

“While a portion of the camp were occupied in bringing up the baggage to this point, the remainder were busied in making sledges and snow-shoes. I had determined to explore the mountain ahead, and the sledges were to be used in transporting the baggage.

“*February 6.* Accompanied by Mr. Fitzpatrick, I sat out to-day with a reconnoitring party, on snow-shoes. We marched all in a single file, trampling the snow as heavily as we could. Crossing the open basin, in a march of about ten miles we reached the top of one of the peaks, to the left of the pass indicated by our guide. Far below us, dimmed by the distance, was a large







snowless valley, bounded on the western side, at the distance of about a hundred miles, by a low range of mountains, which Carson recognized with delight as the mountains bordering the coast. 'There,' said he, 'is the little mountain—it is fifteen years ago since I saw it; but I am just as sure as if I had seen it yesterday. Between us, then, and this low coast range, was the valley of the Sacramento; and no one who had not accompanied us through the incidents of our life for the last few months, could realize the delight with which at last we looked down upon it. At the distance of apparently thirty miles beyond us were distinguished spots of prairie; and a dark line, which could be traced with the glass, was imagined to be the course of the river; but we were evidently at a great height above the valley, and between us and the plains extended miles of snowy fields, and broken ridges of pine-covered mountains.

"It was late in the day when we turned towards the camp; and it grew rapidly cold as it drew towards night. One of the men became fatigued, and his feet began to freeze, and, building a fire in the trunk of a dry old cedar, Mr. Fitzpatrick remained with him until his clothes could be dried, and he was in a condition to come on. After a day's march of twenty miles, we straggled into camp, one after another, at nightfall; the greater number excessively fatigued,

only two of the party having ever travelled on snow-shoes before.

“All our energies were now directed to getting our animals across the snow; and it was supposed that, after all the baggage had been drawn with the sleighs over the trail we had made, it would be sufficiently hard to bear our animals. At several places, between this point and the ridge, we had discovered some grassy spots, where the wind and sun had dispersed the snow from the sides of the hills, and these were to form resting-places to support the animals for a night in their passage across. On our way across, we had set on fire several broken stumps, and dried trees, to melt holes in the snow for the camps. Its general depth was five feet; but we passed over places where it was twenty feet deep, as shown by the trees.

“With one party drawing sleighs loaded with baggage, I advanced to-day, about four miles along the trail, and encamped at the first grassy spot where we expected to bring our horses. Mr. Fitzpatrick, with another party, remained behind, to form an intermediate station between us and the animals.

“*February 8.* The night has been extremely cold; but perfectly still, and beautifully clear. Before the sun appeared this morning, the thermometer was 3° below zero; 1° higher, when his rays struck the lofty peaks; and 0° when they reached our camp.

“Scenery and weather combined must render these mountains beautiful in summer; the purity and deep-blue color of the sky are singularly beautiful; the days are sunny and bright, and even warm in the noon hours; and if we could be free from the many anxieties that oppress us, even now we would be delighted here; but our provisions are getting fearfully scant.

“Putting on our snow-shoes, we spent the afternoon in exploring a road ahead. The glare of the snow, combined with great fatigue, had rendered many of the people nearly blind; but we were fortunate in having some black silk handkerchiefs, which, worn as veils, very much relieved the eye.

“*February 11.* In the evening I received a message from Mr. Fitzpatrick, acquainting me with the utter failure of his attempt to get our mules and horses over the snow—the half-hidden trail had proved entirely too slight to support them, and they had broken through, and were plunging about or lying half-buried in snow. He was occupied in endeavoring to get them back to his camp; and in the mean time sent to me for further instructions. I wrote to him to send the animals immediately back to their old pastures; and, after having made mauls and shovels, turn in all the strength of his party to open and beat a road through the snow, strengthening it with branches and boughs of the pines.

"*February 12.* We made mauls, and worked hard at our end of the road all the day. The wind was high, but the sun bright, and the snow thawing. We worked down the face of the hill, to meet the people at the other end. Towards sundown it began to grow cold, and we shouldered our mauls and trudged back to camp.

"*February 13.* We continued to labor on the road; and in the course of the day had the satisfaction to see the people working down the face of the opposite hill, about three miles distant. During the morning we had the pleasure of a visit from Mr. Fitzpatrick, with the information that all was going on well. A party of Indians had passed on snow-shoes, who said they were going to the western side of the mountain after fish. This was an indication that the salmon were coming up the streams; and we could hardly restrain our impatience as we thought of them, and worked with increased vigor.

"The meat train did not arrive this evening, and I gave Godey leave to kill our little dog (Tlamath,) which he prepared in Indian fashion—scorching off the hair, and washing the skin with soap and snow, and then cutting it up into pieces, which were laid on the snow. We had to-night an extraordinary dinner—pea-soup, mule, and dog.



“ *February 14.* With Mr. Preuss, I ascended to-day the highest peak to the right; from which we had a beautiful view of a mountain lake at our feet, about fifteen miles in length, and so entirely surrounded by mountains that we could not discover an outlet. We had taken with us a glass; but, though we enjoyed an extended view, the valley was half hidden in mist, as when we had seen it before. Snow could be distinguished on the higher parts of the coast mountains; eastward, as far as the eye could extend, it ranged over a terrible mass of broken snowy mountains, fading off blue in the distance.

“ *February 16.* We had succeeded in getting our animals safely to the first grassy hill; and this morning I started with Jacob on a reconnoitring expedition beyond the mountain. We travelled along the crests of narrow ridges, extending down from the mountain in the direction of the valley, from which the snow was fast melting away. On the open spots was tolerably good grass; and I judged we should succeed in getting the camp down by way of these. Towards sundown we discovered some icy spots in a deep hollow; and, descending the mountain, we encamped on the head-water of a little creek, where at last the water found its way to the Pacific.

“ The night was clear and very long. We



heard the cries of some wild animals, which had been attracted by our fire, and a flock of geese passed over during the night. Even these strange sounds had something pleasant to our senses in this region of silence and desolation.

“ We started again early in the morning. The creek acquired a regular breadth of about 20 feet, and we soon began to hear the rushing of the water below the ice surface, over which we travelled to avoid the snow ; a few miles below we broke through, where the water was several feet deep, and halted to make a fire and dry our clothes. We continued a few miles further, walking being very laborious without snow-shoes.

“ I was now perfectly satisfied that we had struck the stream on which Mr. Sutter lived ; and, turning about, made a hard push, and reached the camp at dark. Here we had the pleasure to find all the remaining animals, 57 in number, safely arrived at the grassy hill near the camp ; and here, also, we were agreeably surprised with the sight of an abundance of salt. Some of the horse-guard had gone to a neighboring hut for pine nuts, and discovered, unexpectedly, a large cake of very white, fine-grained salt, which the Indians told them they had brought from the other side of the mountain ; they used it to eat with their pine nuts, and readily sold it for goods.





“On the 19th the people were occupied in making a road and bringing up the baggage; and, on the afternoon of the next day, February 20, 1844, we encamped with the animals and all the material of the camp, on the summit of the Pass in the dividing ridge, 1,000 miles by our travelled road from the Dalles of the Columbia.

“The people, who had not yet been to this point, climbed the neighboring peak to enjoy a look at the valley.

“The temperature of boiling water gave for the elevation of the encampment 9,338 feet above the sea.

“This was 2,000 feet higher than the South Pass in the Rocky Mountains, and several peaks in view rose several thousand feet still higher. Thus, at the extremity of the continent, and near the coast, the phenomenon was seen of a range of mountains still higher than the great Rocky Mountains themselves. This extraordinary fact accounts for the Great Basin, and shows that there must be a system of small lakes and rivers here scattered over a flat country, and which the extended and lofty range of the Sierra Nevada prevents from escaping to the Pacific Ocean. Latitude  $38^{\circ} 44'$ , longitude  $120^{\circ} 28'$ .

“Thus this pass in the Sierra Nevada, which so well deserves its name of Snowy Mountain,

is eleven degrees west, and about four degrees south of the South Pass.

“ *February 21.* We now considered ourselves victorious over the mountain; having only the descent before us, and the valley under our eyes, we felt strong hope that we should force our way down. But this was a case in which the descent was not facile. Still deep fields of snow lay between, and there was a large intervening space of rough-looking mountains, through which we had yet to wind our way. Carson roused me this morning with an early fire, and we were all up long before day, in order to pass the snow-fields before the sun should render the crust soft. We enjoyed this morning a scene at sunrise, which even here was unusually glorious and beautiful. Immediately above the eastern mountains was repeated a cloud-formed mass of purple ranges, bordered with bright yellow gold; the peaks shot up into a narrow line of crimson cloud, above which the air was filled with a greenish orange; and over all was the singular beauty of the blue sky.

“ We had hard and doubtful labor yet before us, as the snow appeared to be heavier where the timber began further down, with few open spots. Ascending a height, we traced out the best line we could discover for the next day's march, and had at least the consolation to see that the mountain descended rapidly. The day had



been one of April ; gusty, with a few occasional flakes of snow ; which, in the afternoon, enveloped the upper mountain in clouds. We watched them anxiously, as now we dreaded a snow-storm. Shortly afterwards we heard the roll of thunder, and, looking towards the valley, found it all enveloped in a thunder-storm. For us, as connected with the idea of summer, it had a singular charm ; and we watched its progress with excited feelings until nearly sunset, when the sky cleared off brightly, and we saw a shining line of water directing its course towards another, a broader and larger sheet. We knew that these could be no other than the Sacramento and the bay of San Francisco ; but, after our long wandering in rugged mountains, where so frequently we had met with disappointments, and where the crossing of every ridge displayed some unknown lake or river, we were yet almost afraid to believe that we were at last to escape into the genial country of which we had heard so many glowing descriptions, and dreaded again to find some vast interior lake, whose bitter waters would bring us disappointment. On the southern shore of what appeared to be the bay, could be traced the gleaming line where entered another large stream.

*“February 23.* This was our most difficult day ; we were forced off the ridges by the quantity of snow among the timber, and obliged to



take to the mountain-sides, where, occasionally, rocks and a southern exposure afforded us a chance to scramble along. But these were steep and slippery with snow and ice; and the tough evergreens of the mountain impeded our way, tore our skins, and exhausted our patience. Some of us had the misfortune to wear moccasins with *parflèche* soles, so slippery that we could not keep our feet, and generally crawled across the snow beds. Axes and mauls were necessary to-day, to make a road through the snow. Going ahead with Carson to reconnoitre the road, we reached in the afternoon the river which made the outlet of the lake. Carson sprang over, clear across a place where the stream was compressed among rocks, but the *parflèche* sole of my moccasin glanced from the icy rock, and precipitated me into the river. It was some few seconds before I could recover myself in the current, and Carson thinking me hurt jumped in after me, and we both had an icy bath. We tried to search awhile for my gun, which had been lost in the fall, but the cold drove us out; and, making a large fire on the bank, after we had partially dried ourselves, we went back to meet the camp. We afterwards found that the gun had been slung under the ice which lined the banks of the creek.

“Using our old plan of breaking the road with alternate horses, we reached the creek in

the evening, and camped on a dry open place in the ravine.

*“February 25.* Continuing down the river, which pursued a very direct westerly course through a narrow valley, with only a very slight and narrow bottom land, we made twelve miles, and encamped at some old Indian huts, apparently a fishing-place on the river. The bottom was covered with trees of deciduous foliage, and overgrown with vines and rushes. On a bench of the hill near by, was a field of fresh green grass, six inches long in some of the tufts, which I had the curiosity to measure. The animals were driven here; and I spent part of the afternoon sitting on a large rock among them, enjoying the pauseless rapidity with which they luxuriated in the unaccustomed food.

“The forest was imposing to-day in the magnificence of the trees; some of the pines, bearing large cones, were ten feet in diameter; cedars also abounded, and we measured one twenty-eight and a half feet in circumference four feet from the ground. This noble tree seemed here to be in its proper soil and climate. We found it on both sides of the Sierra, but most abundant on the west.

*“February 26.* We continued to follow the stream, the mountains on either hand increasing in height as we descended, and shutting up the

river narrowly in precipices, along which we had great difficulty to get our horses.

“It rained heavily during the afternoon, and we were forced off the river to the heights above; whence we descended, at nightfall, the point of a spur between the river and a fork of nearly equal size, coming in from the right. Here we saw, on the lower hills, the first flowers in bloom, which occurred suddenly, and in considerable quantity; one of them a species of *gilia*.

“The current in both streams (rather torrents than rivers) was broken by large boulders. It was late, and the animals fatigued; and not succeeding to find a ford immediately, we encamped, although the hill-side afforded but a few stray bunches of grass; the horses, standing about in the rain, looked very miserable.

“*February 27.* We succeeded in fording the stream, and made a trail by which we crossed the point of the opposite hill, which, on the southern exposure, was prettily covered with green grass, and we halted a mile from our last encampment. The river was only about sixty feet wide, but rapid and occasionally deep, foaming among boulders, and the water beautifully clear. We encamped on the hill-slope, as there was no bottom level, and the opposite ridge is continuous, affording no streams.

“We had with us a large kettle; and a mule

being killed here, his head was boiled in it for several hours, and made a passable soup for famished people.

“Below, precipices on the river forced us to the heights, which we ascended by a steep spur two thousand feet high. My favorite horse Proveau, had become very weak, and was scarcely able to bring himself to the top. Travelling here was good, except in crossing the ravines, which were narrow, steep, and frequent. We caught a glimpse of a deer, the first animal we had seen; but did not succeed in approaching him. Proveau could not keep up, and I left Jacob to bring him on, being obliged to press forward with the party, as there was no grass in the forest. We grew very anxious as the day advanced and no grass appeared, for the lives of our animals depended on finding it to-night. They were in just such a condition that grass and repose for the night enabled them to get on the next day. Every hour we had been expecting to see open out before us the valley, which, from the mountain above, seemed almost at our feet. The day was nearly gone; we had made a hard day's march, and found no grass. Towns became light-headed, wandering off into the woods without knowing where he was going, and Jacob brought him back.

“Near nightfall we descended into the steep ravine of a handsome creek thirty feet wide, and

I was engaged in getting the horse up the opposite hill, when I heard a shout from Carson, who had gone ahead a few hundred yards: 'Life yet,' said he as he came up, 'life yet; I have found a hill-side sprinkled with grass enough for the night.' We drove along our horses, and encamped at the place about dark, and there was just room enough to make a place for shelter on the edge of the stream. Three horses were lost to-day,—Proveau; a fine young horse from the Columbia, belonging to Charles Towns; and another Indian horse which carried our cooking utensils; the two former gave out, and the latter strayed off into the woods as we reached the camp.

"*February 29.* We lay shut up in the narrow ravine, and gave the animals a necessary day; and men were sent back after the others. Derosier volunteered to bring up Proveau to whom he knew I was greatly attached, as he had been my favorite horse on both expeditions. Carson and I climbed one of the nearest mountains; the forest land still extended ahead, and the valley appeared as far as ever. The packhorse was found near the camp, but Derosier did not get in.

"*March 1.* Derosier did not get in during the night, and leaving him to follow, as no grass remained here, we continued on over the uplands, crossing many small streams, and

camped again on the river, having made six miles. Here we found the hill-side covered (although lightly) with fresh green grass; and from this time forward we found it always improving and abundant.

“ We made a pleasant camp on the river hill, where were some beautiful specimens of the chocolate-colored shrub, a foot in diameter near the ground, and from fifteen to twenty feet high. The opposite ridge runs continuously along, unbroken by streams. We are rapidly descending into the spring, and we are leaving our snowy region far behind; everything is getting green; butterflies are swarming; numerous bugs are creeping out, wakened from their winter's sleep; and the forest flowers are coming into bloom. Among those which appeared most numerous to-day was *dodecatheon dentatum*.

“ We began to be uneasy at Derosier's absence, fearing he might have been bewildered in the woods. Charles Towns, who had not yet recovered his mind, went to swim in the river, as if it were summer, and the stream placid, when it was a cold mountain torrent foaming among rocks. We were happy to see Derosier appear in the evening. He came in, and, sitting down by the fire, began to tell us where he had been. He imagined he had been gone several days, and thought we were still at



the camp where he had left us ; and we were pained to see that his mind was deranged. It appeared that he had been lost in the mountain, and hunger and fatigue, joined to weakness of body, and fear of perishing in the mountains, had crazed him. The times were severe when stout men lost their minds from extremity of suffering—when horses died—and when mules and horses, ready to die of starvation, were killed for food. Yet there was no murmuring or hesitation.”

On the 2d of March, Mr. Preuss wandered from the party, and was lost. Guns were fired, and every effort made to reach him. All were filled with the deepest distress at his disappearance. On the 4th of March, Derosier, having volunteered the service, was sent back to attempt to find him, being charged to follow the river, not to continue the search more than a day and a half, and, at the end of that time, to turn back towards the point from which he started, where a *cache* of provisions would be left for him.

“Towards evening we heard a weak shout among the hills behind, and had the pleasure to see Mr. Preuss descending towards the camp. Like ourselves, he had travelled to-day twenty-five miles, but had seen nothing of Derosier. Knowing, on the day he was lost, that I was determined to keep the river as much as possible, he had not thought it necessary to follow the

trail very closely, but walked on right and left, certain to find it somewhere along the river, searching places to obtain good views of the country. Towards sunset he climbed down towards the river, to look for the camp; but, finding no trail, concluded that we were behind, and walked back until night came on, when, being very much fatigued, he collected driftwood and made a large fire among the rocks. The next day it became more serious, and he encamped again alone, thinking that we must have taken some other course. To go back would have been madness in his weak and starved condition, and onward towards the valley was his only hope, always in expectation of reaching it soon. His principal means of subsistence were a few roots, which the hunters call sweet onions, having very little taste, but a good deal of nutriment, growing generally in rocky ground, and requiring a good deal of labor to get, as he had only a pocket-knife. Searching for these, he found a nest of big ants, which he let run on his hand, and stripped them off in his mouth; these had an agreeable acid taste. One of his greatest privations was the want of tobacco; and a pleasant smoke at evening would have been a relief which only a voyageur could appreciate. He tried the dried leaves of the live oak, knowing that those of other oaks were sometimes used as a substitute; but these were too thick,

and would not do. On the 4th he made seven or eight miles, walking slowly along the river avoiding as much as possible to climb the hills. In little pools he caught some of the smallest kind of frogs, which he swallowed, not so much in the gratification of hunger, as in the hope of obtaining some strength. Scattered along the river were old fire-places, where the Indians had roasted muscles and acorns; but though he searched diligently, he did not there succeed in finding either. He had collected firewood for the night, when he heard at some distance from the river the barking of what he thought were two dogs, and walked in that direction as quickly as he was able, hoping to find there some Indian hut, but met only two wolves; and, in his disappointment, the gloom of the forest was doubled.

“ Travelling the next day feebly down the river, he found five or six Indians at the huts of which we have spoken. Some were painting themselves black, and others roasting acorns. Being only one man, they did not run off, but received him kindly, and gave him a welcome supply of roasted acorns. He gave them his pocket-knife in return, and stretched out his hand to one of the Indians, who did not appear to comprehend the motion, but jumped back, as if he thought he was about to lay hold of him. They seemed afraid of him, not certain as to what he was.

“ Travelling on, he came to the place where we had found the squaws. Here he found our fire still burning, and the tracks of the horses. The sight gave him sudden hope and courage ; and, following as fast as he could, joined us at evening.

“ *March 6.* We now pressed on more eagerly than ever ; the river swept round in a large bend to the right ; the hills lowered down entirely ; and, gradually entering a broad valley, we came unexpectedly into a large Indian village, where the people looked clean, and wore cotton shirts and various other articles of dress. They immediately crowded around us, and we had the inexpressible delight to find one who spoke a little indifferent Spanish, but who at first confounded us by saying there were no whites in the country ; but just then a well-dressed Indian came up, and made his salutations in very well-spoken Spanish. In answer to our inquiries, he informed us that we were upon the *Rio de los Americanos*, (the river of the Americans,) and that it joined the Sacramento River about 10 miles below. Never did a name sound more sweetly ! We felt ourselves among our countrymen ; for the name of *American*, in these distant parts is applied to the citizens of the United States. To our eager inquiries he answered, ‘ I am a *vaquero* (cow-herd) in the service of Capt. Sutter, and the people of this *rancheria* work for him.’ Our evident satisfaction made him communicative ; and he went on

to say that Capt. Sutter was a very rich man, and always glad to see his country people. We asked for his house. He answered that it was just over the hill before us; and offered, if we would wait a moment, to take his horse and conduct us to it. We readily accepted his civil offer. In a short distance we came in sight of the fort; and, passing on the way the house of a settler on the opposite side, (a Mr. Sinclair,) we forded the river; and in a few miles were met a short distance from the fort by Capt. Sutter himself. He gave us a most frank and cordial reception—conducted us immediately to his residence—and under his hospitable roof we had a night of rest, enjoyment, and refreshment, which none but ourselves could appreciate. But the party left in the mountains with Mr. Fitzpatrick were to be attended to; and the next morning, supplied with fresh horses and provisions, I hurried off to meet them. On the second day we met, a few miles below the forks of the Rio de los Americanos; and a more forlorn and pitiable sight than they presented cannot well be imagined. They were all on foot—each man, weak and emaciated—leading a horse or mule as weak and emaciated as themselves. They had experienced great difficulty in descending the mountains, made slippery by rains and melting snows, and many horses fell over precipices, and were killed; and with some were lost the



*packs* they carried. Among these, was a mule with the plants which we had collected since leaving Fort Hall, along a line of 2,000 miles travel. Out of 67 horses and mules with which we commenced crossing the Sierra, only 33 reached the valley of the Sacramento, and they only in a condition to be led along. Mr. Fitzpatrick and his party, travelling more slowly, had been able to make some little exertion at hunting, and had killed a few deer. The scanty supply was a great relief to them; for several had been made sick by the strange and unwholesome food which the preservation of life compelled them to use. We stopped and encamped as soon as we met; and a repast of good beef, excellent bread, and delicious salmon, which I had brought along, were their first relief from the sufferings of the Sierra, and their first introduction to the luxuries of the Sacramento. It required all our philosophy and forbearance to prevent *plenty* from becoming as hurtful to us now as *scarcity* had been before."

After resting a few days, and completing preparations for the homeward journey, the party started on the 22d of March. The next day Derosier, who had returned in safety from the search for Mr. Preuss, and whom Fremont ever regarded as among his best men, wandered away from the camp. It was probably owing to a return of the mental derangement which the



sufferings of the recent journey had brought on. All attempts to find him were fruitless, and he was never heard of more, until after the lapse of about two years, he found his way into St. Louis.

Before touching upon the events of the homeward journey, which will be briefly done, we may pause for a moment, and reflect upon the extraordinary expedition from the Dalles to the junction of the Americanos and the Sacramento, of which the disappearance of Derosier may be considered the final incident.

When the season of the year at which it started from the Columbia, and the entirely unknown and forbidding character of the region it penetrated, are fully considered, it must be allowed to be one of the boldest adventures ever undertaken. It was the first exploration of a vast region, of strange features, and occupied by savage tribes and families that no traveller had ever described or seen, covering 11 degrees of latitude and 10 of longitude, between 4000 and 5000 feet above the level of the sea, and shut in between lofty ranges crowned with perpetual snow, the Rocky Mountains in the east and the Sierra Nevada on the west. Throughout this great basin, the streams flow not into rivers seeking distant seas, but into numerous and many of them wide lakes, having no apparent connection with the oceans of the globe, deeply impreg-

nated in some instances, with saline and mineral ingredients, in some, turbid and thick with vegetable matter, but often clear, pure, refreshing, translucent to great depths, bordered by beaches of the finest sand, and stocked with delicious fish. The shores are surrounded by picturesque, bold, and magnificent scenery.

Some portions of this vast tract are dreary deserts, in which no animal can live, and from which nearly the whole vegetable world shrinks away. Other portions are fertile and luxuriant in the highest degree, possessing all that valley, cliff, meadow, mountain, forest, and river can contribute to the perfection of landscape beauty. Above is spread a sky, with an atmosphere clearer, and a blue deeper and softer, than hangs over any other region. Of this very remarkable tract, constituting the central plate or basin of the continent, Fremont was the first explorer, and the heroism, resolution, and unconquerable perseverance of his brave party, is one of the most interesting chapters in that series of achievements which has secured and subdued this continent to our form of civilization, and will bring it all, at last, under our flag.

The expedition pursued its course southerly along the western base of the Sierra Nevada, crossing the heads of the streams that flow through California to the Bay of San Francisco. On the 13th of April it entered a pass, a little

above the 35th parallel of latitude, and crossed the summit the next day.

“As we reached the summit of this beautiful pass, and obtained a view into the eastern country, we saw at once that here was the place to take leave of all such pleasant scenes as those around us. The distant mountains were now bald rocks again; and below, the land had any color but green. Taking into consideration the nature of the Sierra Nevada, we found this pass an excellent one for horses; and with a little labor, or perhaps with a more perfect examination of the localities, it might be made sufficiently practicable for wagons. Its latitude and longitude may be considered that of our last encampment, only a few miles distant. The elevation was not taken, our half-wild cavalcade making it too troublesome to halt before night, when once started.

“We here left the waters of the Bay of San Francisco, and, though forced upon them contrary to my intentions, I cannot regret the necessity which occasioned the deviation. It made me well acquainted with the great range of the Sierra Nevada of the Alta California, and showed that this broad and elevated snowy ridge was a continuation of the Cascade Range, of Oregon, between which and the ocean there is still another and a lower range, parallel to the former and to the coast, and which may be called the Coast

Range. It also made me well acquainted with the basin of the San Francisco Bay, and with the two pretty rivers and their valleys, (the Sacramento and San Joaquin,) which are tributary to that bay; and cleared up some points in geography on which error had long prevailed. It had been constantly represented, as I have already stated, that the Bay of San Francisco opened far into the interior, by some river coming down from the base of the Rocky Mountains, and upon which supposed stream the name of Rio Buenaventura had been bestowed. Our observations of the Sierra Nevada, in the long distance from the head of the Sacramento to the head of the San Joaquin, and of the valley below it, which collects all the waters of the San Francisco Bay, show that this neither is nor can be the case. No river from the interior does or can cross the Sierra Nevada—itself more lofty than the Rocky Mountains; and as to the Buenaventura, the mouth of which, seen on the coast, gave the idea and the name of the reputed great river, it is, in fact, a small stream of no consequence, not only below the Sierra Nevada, but actually below the Coast Range, taking its rise within half a degree of the ocean, running parallel to it for about two degrees, and then falling into the Pacific near Monterey. There is no opening from the Bay of San Francisco into the interior of the continent. The two rivers

which flow into it are comparatively short, and not perpendicular to the coast, but lateral to it, and having their heads towards Oregon and Southern California. They open lines of communication north and south, and not eastwardly; and thus this want of interior communication from the San Francisco Bay, now fully ascertained, gives great additional value to the Columbia, which stands alone as the only great river on the Pacific slope of our continent which leads from the ocean to the Rocky Mountains, and opens a line of communication from the sea to the valley of the Mississippi.

“Our cavalcade made a strange and grotesque appearance, and it was impossible to avoid reflecting upon our position and composition in this remote solitude. Within two degrees of the Pacific ocean, already far south of the latitude of Monterey, and still forced on south by a desert on one hand, and a mountain range on the other, guided by a civilized Indian, attended by two wild ones from the Sierra, a Chinook from the Columbia, and our own mixture of American, French, German, all armed, four or five languages heard at once, above a hundred horses and mules, half wild, American, Spanish, and Indian dresses and equipments intermingled,—such was our composition. Our march was a sort of procession—scouts ahead and on the flanks, a front and rear division, the pack ani-





fearing up—The order to March—Soon after Sun-rise





mals, baggage, and horned cattle in the centre, and the whole stretching a quarter of a mile along our dreary path.

"*April 25.* In the afternoon, we were surprised by the sudden appearance in the camp of two Mexicans—a man and a boy. The name of the man was Andreas Fuentes, and that of the boy (a handsome lad 11 years old) Pablo Hernandez. They belonged to a party consisting of six persons, the remaining four being the wife of Fuentes, the father and mother of Pablo, and Santiago Giacome, a resident of New Mexico. With a cavalcade of about thirty horses, they had come out from Puebla de los Angeles, near the coast, under the guidance of Giacome, in advance of the great caravan, in order to travel more at leisure and obtain better grass. Having advanced as far into the desert as was considered consistent with their safety, they halted at the Archillette, one of the customary camping grounds, about eighty miles from our encampment, where there is a spring of good water, with sufficient grass, and concluded to await there the arrival of the great caravan. Several Indians were soon discovered lurking about the camp, who, in a day or two after, came in, and, after behaving in a very friendly manner, took their leave, without awakening any suspicions. Their deportment begat a security which proved fatal. In a few days afterwards, sud-

denly a party of about one hundred Indians appeared in sight, advancing towards the camp. It was too late, or they seemed not to have presence of mind to take proper measures of safety; and the Indians charged down into their camp, shouting as they advanced, and discharging flights of arrows. Pablo and Fuentes were on horse-guard at the time, and mounted, according to the custom of the country. One of the principal objects of the Indians was to get possession of the horses, and part of them immediately surrounded the band; but, in obedience to the shouts of Giacome, Fuentes drove the animals over and through the assailants, in spite of their arrows; and, abandoning the rest to their fate, carried them off at speed across the plain. Knowing that they would be pursued by the Indians, without making any halt except to shift their saddles to other horses, they drove them on for about sixty miles, and this morning left them at a watering-place on the trail called Agua de Tomaso. Without giving themselves any time for rest, they hurried on, hoping to meet the Spanish caravan, when they discovered my camp. I received them kindly, taking them into my own mess, and promised them such aid as circumstances might put it in my power to give."

Fuentes was filled with the deepest anxiety about the fate of his wife, and Pablo about that of his father and mother. There was every

reason, indeed, to fear the worst. The sensibilities of Fremont's noble-hearted men were highly excited by the expressions of their grief, and Carson and Godey volunteered to accompany Fuentes in pursuit of the Indians, hoping to deliver the captives, if alive, or avenge them, if dead. Fuentes returned the same night, his horse having given out, but Carson and Godey kept on.

"In the afternoon of the next day, a war-whoop was heard, such as Indians make when returning from a victorious enterprise; and soon Carson and Godey appeared, driving before them a band of horses, recognized by Fuentes to be part of those they had lost. Two bloody scalps, dangling from the end of Godey's gun, announced that they had overtaken the Indians, as well as the horses. They informed us, that after Fuentes left them, from the failure of his horse, they continued the pursuit alone, and towards nightfall entered the mountains, into which the trail led. After sunset the moon gave light, and they followed the trail by moonshine until late in the night, when it entered a narrow defile, and was difficult to follow. Afraid of losing it in the darkness of the defile, they tied up their horses, struck no fire, and lay down to sleep in silence and in darkness. Here they lay from midnight till morning. At daylight they resumed the pursuit, and about sun-

rise discovered the horses; and, immediately dismounting and tying up their own, they crept cautiously to a rising ground which intervened, from the crest of which they perceived the encampment of four lodges close by. They proceeded quietly, and had got within thirty or forty yards of their object, when a movement among the horses discovered them to the Indians; giving the war shout, they instantly charged into the camp, regardless of the number which the *four* lodges would imply. The Indians received them with a flight of arrows shot from their long bows, one of which passed through Godey's shirt collar, barely missing the neck; our men fired their rifles upon a steady aim, and rushed in. Two Indians were stretched on the ground, fatally pierced with bullets; the rest fled, except a lad that was captured. The scalps of the fallen were instantly stripped off; but in the process, one of them, who had a ball through his body, sprung to his feet, the blood streaming from his skinned head, and uttering a hideous howl. An old squaw, possibly his mother, stopped and looked back from the mountain side she was climbing, threatening and lamenting. The frightful spectacle appalled the stout hearts of our men; but they did what humanity required, and quickly terminated the agonies of the gory savage. They were now masters of the camp,

which was a pretty little recess in the mountain, with a fine spring, and apparently safe from all invasion. Great preparations had been made to feast a large party, for it was a very proper place for a rendezvous, and for the celebration of such orgies as robbers of the desert would delight in. Several of the best horses had been killed, skinned, and cut up; for the Indians living in mountains, and only coming into the plains to rob and murder, make no other use of horses than to eat them. Large earthen vessels were on the fire, boiling and stewing the horse-beef; and several baskets, containing fifty or sixty pairs of moccasins, indicated the presence, or expectation, of a considerable party. They released the boy, who had given strong evidence of the stoicism, or something else, of the savage character, in commencing his breakfast upon a horse's head as soon as he found he was not to be killed, but only tied as a prisoner. Their object accomplished, our men gathered up all the surviving horses, fifteen in number, returned upon their trail, and rejoined us at our camp in the afternoon of the same day. They had rode about one hundred miles in the pursuit and return, and all in thirty hours. The time, place, object, and numbers considered, this expedition of Carson and Godey may be considered among the boldest and most disinterested which the annals of western adventure, so full of daring



deeds, can present. Two men, in a savage desert, pursue day and night an unknown body of Indians into the defiles of an unknown mountain—attack them on sight, without counting numbers—and defeat them in an instant,—and for what? To punish the robbers of the desert, and to avenge the wrongs of Mexicans whom they did not know. I repeat: it was Carson and Godey who did this—the former an American, born in Kentucky; the latter a Frenchman by descent, born in St. Louis; and both trained to western enterprise from early life.”

The foregoing passage presents a horrid spectacle of the barbarities incident to a wilderness life. The mind shudders at the details of the bloody conflict; but it was not long before ample and fearful evidence appeared that the sudden and awful retribution inflicted upon the savages by the intrepid Carson and his well-matched associate, was fully merited.

“*April 29.* To-day we had to reach the Archillette, distant seven miles, where the Mexican party had been attacked; and, leaving our encampment early, we traversed a part of the desert, the most sterile and repulsive that we had yet seen. Its prominent features were dark *sierras*, naked and dry; on the plains a few straggling shrubs—among them, cactus of several varieties. Fuentes pointed out one called by the Spaniards *bisnada*, which has a juicy pulp,

slightly acid, and is eaten by the traveller to allay thirst. Our course was generally north; and, after crossing an intervening ridge, we descended into a sandy plain, or basin, in the middle of which was the grassy spot, with its springs and willow bushes, which constitutes a camping-place in the desert, and is called the Archillette. The dead silence of the place was ominous; and, galloping rapidly up, we found only the corpses of the two men; every thing else was gone. They were naked, mutilated, and pierced with arrows. Hernandez had evidently fought, and with desperation. He lay in advance of the willow, half-faced tent, which sheltered his family, as if he had come out to meet danger, and to repulse it from that asylum. \* One of his hands, and both his legs, had been cut off. Giacome, who was a large and strong-looking man, was lying in one of the willow shelters, pierced with arrows. Of the women no trace could be found, and it was evident they had been carried off captive. A little lap-dog, which had belonged to Pablo's mother, remained with the dead bodies, and was frantic with joy at seeing Pablo; he, poor child, was frantic with grief; and filled the air with lamentations for his father and mother. *Mi padre!*—*mi madre!*—was his incessant cry. When we beheld this pitiable sight, and pictured to ourselves the fate of the two women,

carried off by savages so brutal and so loathsome, all compunction for the scalped-alive Indian ceased; and we rejoiced that Carson and Godey had been able to give so useful a lesson to these American Arabs, who lie in wait to murder and plunder the innocent traveller.

“We were all too much affected by the sad feelings which the place inspired, to remain an unnecessary moment. The night we were obliged to pass there. Early in the morning we left it, having first written a brief account of what had happened, and put it in the cleft of a pole planted at the spring, that the approaching caravan might learn the fate of their friends. In commemoration of the event, we called the place *Agua de Hernandez*—Hernandez’s spring.”

It was afterwards ascertained that the wife of Fuentes, and mother of Pablo, were both murdered at a short distance beyond, and probably a few hours after their capture, under circumstances of the most incredible and brutal cruelty, and after fiendlike outrages and tortures.

The circumstances just related prove that Kit Carson is worthy of the renown he enjoys in the estimation of the backwoodsmen of America, as the hero of the prairies and the mountains. His name is so intimately identified with that of Fremont, that these pages owe a special tribute to his manly and noble virtues. They first met accidentally on a steamboat above St.





Kit Carson.

Louis, as Fremont was starting on his first expedition—neither had ever heard of the other. But Carson's character, although then unknown in the settlements, had long before become an object of pride and admiration to every brave heart among the trappers and hunters of America.

Christopher Carson was born in Kentucky about the year 1811, his father having been one of the early settlers of that State, and noted in his day as a hunter and Indian fighter. Within a year or two after the birth of Kit, the family moved to the then frontiers of Missouri. At the age of fifteen Kit joined a trading party to Sante Fe. From that point he went into the lower Mexican provinces, following various adventures; among others he was employed for some time as a teamster, in connection with the copper mines of Chihuahua. At seventeen years of age he commenced life as a trapper, in the region of the Rio Colorado of California. After many perils he returned to Taos, in New Mexico, and joined a trapping party to the head waters of the Arkansas, and spent about eight years in that occupation, principally among the mountains where the Missouri and Columbia rivers take their rise. The business of trapping was then in its more flourishing state, and formed a class of men of marked and striking traits. Nature in her original aspects, and in all her



wildness and grandeur, was their home. Savages, fierce, brave, and stealthy, met them at every point—and privation, danger, and suffering were an ordinary experience. This mode of life, in its perfect freedom and manly excitements and achievements, was favorable in many respects to the development of noble energies and sentiments. Carson soon became preëminent in these characteristics, and was famous as a successful trapper, unerring shot, and reliable guide and leader. In conflicts with hostile Indians he conducted many a daring and 'victorious enterprise.' In one of these conflicts with the Blackfeet he received 'a rifle ball in his left shoulder, the only personal injury he ever met in battle.

He is a remarkably peaceable and quiet man, temperate in his habits, and strictly moral in his deportment. In a letter written from California, in 1847, introducing Carson as the bearer of despatches to the government, Col. Fremont says, "with me, Carson and truth mean the same thing. He is always the same—gallant and disinterested." He is kind-hearted, and averse to all quarrelsome and turbulent scenes, and has never been engaged in any mere personal broils or encounters, except on one single occasion, which he sometimes modestly describes to his friends. The narrative, as he gives it, is fully confirmed by an eye-witness, of whose

presence at the time he was not aware, and whose account he has probably never seen or heard of. I shall tell the story as it is gathered from them both.

• In the year 1835, the Rev. Samuel Parker made an exploring and missionary tour, under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, beyond the Rocky Mountains, and as far as the settlements on the Columbia River. In his printed journal he gives an account of the incident to which I am referring; it occurred on the 12th of August, at a point on the borders of Green River, beyond the South Pass, on the occasion of a "rendezvous," that is, on a spot selected for Indians, trappers, and hunters to bring to market their peltries, and obtain supplies from the agents of the Fur Companies. There was a large concourse of savage tribes, and all the various denizens of the wilderness. There were Frenchmen, Spaniards, Dutchmen, Canadians, and Western backwoodsmen. The Rev. Mr. Parker happened to be there, to witness the strange gathering. Of course there were some rude characters, and not a little irregularity and disorder. Conflicts were liable to arise between quarrelsome persons, growing out of the feuds among the tribes, and animosities between the representatives of different nations, all actuated by pride of race or country.

A hunter, named Shunan, a Frenchman, who was well known by the title of the "big bully of the mountains," mounted his horse with a loaded rifle, and dashing defiantly around, challenged any person, of any nationality, to meet him in single combat. He boasted of his exploits, and used the most insulting and irritating language, and was particularly insolent and abusive towards Americans, whom he described as only worth being whipped with switches. Kit Carson was in the crowd, and his patriotic spirit kindled at the taunt. He at once stepped forward and said, "I am an American, the most trifling one among them, but if you wish to die, I will accept your challenge." Shunan defied him. Carson at once leaped upon his horse, with a loaded pistol, and both dashed into close conflict. They fired, almost at the same moment, but Carson an instant the quickest. Their horses heads touched. Shunan's ball just grazed Carson's cheek, near the left eye, and cut off some locks of his hair. Carson's ball entered Shunan's hand, came out at the wrist, and passed through his arm above the elbow. The bully begged for his life, and it was spared.

This put an effectual stop to all such insolent proceedings, and Americans were insulted no longer. We shall have occasion to refer to Carson at several points in the residue of this work. He is still living, being yet, indeed, in his prime.

President Polk nominated him to the Senate for a commission in the army, corresponding to what he had held in the California battalion, that of a lieutenancy in the Rifle corps. The nomination was not confirmed by the Senate. His faithful commander has recorded his name on the geography of the continent, by calling after him a river and a lake, in the great basin they explored together. He is, at this time, Indian agent for New Mexico. He was early married to a Sioux woman, to whom he was devotedly attached. She died, leaving one daughter. Carson's present wife is a New Mexican lady of great worth and respectability.

The following passage from Fremont's Journal conveys a vivid idea of the wilder races of Indians:—

“In the darkness of the night we had made a very bad encampment, our fires being commanded by a rocky bluff within fifty yards; but, notwithstanding, we had the river and small thickets of willows on the other side. Several times during the day the camp was insulted by the Indians; but peace being our object, I kept simply on the defensive. Some of the Indians were on the bottoms, and others haranguing us from the bluffs; and they were scattered in every direction over the hills. Their language being probably a dialect of the Utah, with the aid of signs some of our people could comprehend them

very well. They were the same people who had murdered the Mexicans; and towards us their disposition was evidently hostile, nor were we well disposed towards them. They were barefooted and nearly naked; their hair gathered up into a knot behind; and with his bow each man carried a quiver with thirty or forty arrows partially drawn out. Besides these, each held in his hand two or three arrows for instant service. Their arrows are barbed with a very clear translucent stone, a species of opal, nearly as hard as the diamond; and, shot from their long bow, are almost as effective as a gunshot. In these Indians, I was forcibly struck by an expression of countenance resembling that in a beast of prey; and all their actions are those of wild animals. Joined to the restless motion of the eye, there is a want of mind—an absence of thought—and an action wholly by impulse, strongly expressed, and which constantly recalls the similarity.

“A man who appeared to be a chief, with two or three others, forced himself into camp, bringing with him his arms, in spite of my orders to the contrary. When shown our weapons, he bored his ear with his fingers, and said he could not hear. ‘Why,’ said he, ‘there are none of you.’ Counting the people around the camp, and including in the number a mule which was being shod, he made out twenty-two. ‘So many,’ said he, showing the number, ‘and we—



we are a great many;' and he pointed to the hills and mountains round about. 'If you have your arms,' said he, twanging his bow, 'we have these.' I had some difficulty in restraining the people, particularly Carson, who felt an insult of this kind as much as if it had been given by a more responsible being. 'Don't say that, old man,' said he; 'don't you say that—your life's in danger,'—speaking in good English; and probably the old man was nearer to his end than he will be before he meets it.

"I had been engaged in arranging plants; and, fatigued with the heat of the day, I fell asleep in the afternoon, and did not awake until sundown. Presently Carson came to me, and reported that Tabeau, who early in the day had left his post, and, without my knowledge, rode back to the camp we had left, in search of a lame mule, had not returned. While we were speaking, a smoke rose suddenly from the cottonwood grove below, which plainly told us what had befallen him. It was raised to inform the surrounding Indians that a blow had been struck, and to tell them to be on their guard. Carson, with several men well mounted, was instantly sent down the river, but returned in the night without tidings of the missing man. They went to the camp we had left, but neither he nor the mule was there. Searching down the river, they found the tracks of the mule, evidently driven



along by Indians, whose tracks were on each side of those made by the animal. After going several miles, they came to the mule itself, standing in some bushes, mortally wounded in the side by an arrow, and left to die, that it might be afterwards butchered for food. They also found in another place, as they were hunting about on the ground for Tabeau's tracks, something that looked like a little puddle of blood, but which the darkness prevented them from verifying. With these details they returned to our camp, and their report saddened all our hearts.

"*May 10.* This morning, as soon as there was light enough to follow tracks, I set out myself with Mr. Fitzpatrick and several men in search of Tabeau. We went to the spot where the appearance of puddled blood had been seen; and this, we saw at once, had been the place where he fell and died. Blood upon the leaves and beaten-down bushes, showed that he had got his wound about twenty paces from where he fell, and that he had struggled for his life. He had probably been shot through the lungs with an arrow. From the place where he lay and bled, it could be seen that he had been dragged to the river bank, and thrown into it. No vestige of what had belonged to him could be found, except a fragment of his horse equipment. Horse, gun, clothes—all became the prey of these Arabs of the New World.

“Tabeau had been one of our best men, and his unhappy death spread a gloom over our party. Men, who have gone through such dangers and sufferings as we had seen, become like brothers, and feel each other's loss. To defend and avenge each other, is the deep feeling of all. We wished to avenge his death; but the condition of our horses, languishing for grass and repose, forbade an expedition into unknown mountains. We knew the tribe who had done the mischief—the same which had been insulting our camp. They knew what they deserved, and had the discretion to show themselves to us no more. The day before, they infested our camp; now, not one appeared; nor did we ever afterwards see but one who even belonged to the same tribe, and he at a distance.”

The circumstances of the murder, by these savages, of one of the tried and faithful followers of Fremont, shows the perils that always hang round a party travelling through the regions over which they roam.

On the 24th of May, the expedition, having skirted the southern rim of the great basin, reached the Utah Lake. At this point it is eminently proper to let Fremont himself review his route.

“Early the next day we came in sight of the lake; and, as we descended to the broad bottoms of the Spanish Fork, three horsemen were seen

galloping towards us, who proved to be Utah Indians—scouts from a village, which was encamped near the mouth of the river. They were armed with rifles, and their horses were in good condition. We encamped near them, on the Spanish Fork, which is one of the principal tributaries to the lake. Finding the Indians troublesome, and desirous to remain here a day, we removed the next morning further down the lake, and encamped on a fertile bottom near the foot of the same mountainous ridge which borders the Great Salt Lake, and along which we had journeyed the previous September.

“We had now accomplished an object we had in view when leaving the Dalles of the Columbia in November last; we had reached the Utah Lake; but by a route very different from what we had intended, and without sufficient time remaining to make the examinations which were desired. It is a lake of note in this country, under the dominion of the Utahs, who resort to it for fish. Its greatest breadth is about fifteen miles, stretching far to the north, narrowing as it goes, and connecting with the Great Salt Lake.

“In arriving at the Utah Lake, we had completed an immense circuit of twelve degrees diameter north and south, and ten degrees east and west; and found ourselves in May, 1844, on the same sheet of water which we had left in September, 1843. The Utah is the southern

limb of the Great Salt Lake; and thus we had seen that remarkable sheet of water both at its northern and southern extremity, and were able to fix its position at these two points. The circuit which we had made, and which had cost us eight months of time, and 3,500 miles of travelling, had given us a view of Oregon and of North California from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific ocean, and of the two principal streams which form bays or harbors on the coast of that sea. Having completed this circuit, and being now about to turn the back upon the Pacific slope of our continent, and to recross the Rocky Mountains, it is natural to look back upon our footsteps, and take some brief view of the leading features and general structure of the country we had traversed. These are peculiar and striking, and differ essentially from the Atlantic side of our country. The mountains all are higher, more numerous, and more distinctly defined in their ranges and directions; and, what is so contrary to the natural order of such formations, one of these ranges, which is near the coast, (the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range,) presents higher elevations and peaks than any which are to be found in the Rocky Mountains themselves. In our eight months' circuit, we were never out of sight of snow; and the Sierra Nevada, where we crossed it, was near 2,000 feet higher than the South Pass

in the Rocky Mountains. In height, these mountains greatly exceed those of the Atlantic side, constantly presenting peaks which enter the region of eternal snow; and some of them volcanic, and in a frequent state of activity. They are seen at great distances and guide the traveller in his courses.

“The course and elevation of these ranges give direction to the rivers, and character to the coast. No great river does, or can, take its rise below the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Range; the distance to the sea is too short to admit of it. The rivers of the San Francisco Bay, which are the largest after the Columbia, are local to that bay, and lateral to the coast, having their sources about on a line with the Dalles of the Columbia, and running each in the valley of its own, between the Coast Range and the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Range. The Columbia is the only river which traverses the whole breadth of the country, breaking through all the ranges, and entering the sea. Drawing its waters from a section of ten degrees of latitude in the Rocky Mountains, which are collected into one stream by three main forks, (Lewis’s, Clark’s, and the North Fork,) near the centre of the Oregon valley, this great river thence proceeds by a single channel to the sea, while its three forks lead each to a pass in the mountains, which opens the way into the interior of the continent.



This fact in relation to the rivers of this region gives an immense value to the Columbia. Its mouth is the only inlet and outlet to and from the sea; its three forks lead to the passes in the mountains; it is, therefore, the only line of communication between the Pacific and the interior of North America; and all operations of war or commerce, of national or social intercourse, must be conducted upon it. This gives it a value beyond estimation, and would involve irreparable injury if lost. In this unity and concentration of its waters, the Pacific side of our continent differs entirely from the Atlantic side, where the waters of the Alleghany Mountains are dispersed into many rivers, having their different entrances into the sea, and opening many lines of communication with the interior.

“The Pacific coast is equally different from that of the Atlantic. The coast of the Atlantic is low and open, indented with numerous bays, sounds, and river estuaries, accessible everywhere, and opening by many channels into the heart of the country. The Pacific coast, on the contrary, is high and compact, with few bays, and but one that opens into the heart of the country. The immediate coast is what the seamen call *iron bound*. A little within, it is skirted by two successive ranges of mountains, standing as ramparts between the sea and the interior country; and to get through which, there is but



one gate, and that narrow and easily defended. This structure of the coast, backed by these two ranges of mountains, with its concentration and unity of waters, gives to the country an immense military strength, and will probably render Oregon the most impregnable country in the world.

“Differing so much from the Atlantic side of our continent, in coast, mountains, and rivers, the Pacific side differs from it in another most rare and singular feature—that of the Great interior Basin, of which I have so often spoken, and the whole form and character of which I was so anxious to ascertain. Its existence is vouched for by such of the American traders and hunters as have some knowledge of that region; the structure of the Sierra Nevada range of mountains requires it to be there; and my own observations confirm it. Mr. Joseph Walker, who is so well acquainted in those parts, informed me that, from the Great Salt Lake west, there was a succession of lakes and rivers which have no outlet to the sea, nor any connection with the Columbia, or with the Colorado of the Gulf of California. He described some of these lakes as being large, with numerous streams, and even considerable rivers, falling into them. In fact, all concur in the general report of these interior rivers and lakes; and, for want of understanding the force and power of evaporation, which so soon establishes an equilibrium be-

tween the loss and supply of waters, the fable of whirlpools and subterraneous outlets has gained belief as the only imaginable way of carrying off the waters which have no visible discharge. The structure of the country would require this formation of interior lakes ; for the waters which would collect between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, not being able to cross this formidable barrier, nor to get to the Columbia or the Colorado, must naturally collect into reservoirs, each of which would have its little system of streams and rivers to supply it. This would be the natural effect ; and what I saw went to confirm it. The Great Salt Lake is a formation of this kind, and quite a large one ; and having many streams, and one considerable river, four or five hundred miles long, falling into it. This lake and river I saw and examined myself ; and also saw the Wahsatch and Bear River Mountains which enclose the waters of the lake on the east, and constitute, in that quarter, the rim of the Great Basin. Afterwards, along the eastern base of the Sierra Nevada, where we travelled for forty-two days, I saw the line of lakes and rivers which lie at the foot of that Sierra ; and which Sierra is the western rim of the Basin. In going down Lewis's Fork and the main Columbia, I crossed only inferior streams coming in from the left, such as could draw their water from a short distance only ; and

I often saw the mountains at their heads, white with snow ; which, all accounts said, divided the waters of the *desert* from those of the Columbia, and which could be no other than the range of mountains which form the rim of the Basin on its northern side. And in returning from California along the Spanish trail, as far as the head of the Santa Clara Fork of the Rio Virgen, I crossed only small streams making their way south to the Colorado, or lost in sand—as the Mo-hah-ve ; while to the left, lofty mountains, their summits white with snow, were often visible, and which must have turned water to the north as well as to the south, and thus constituted, on this part, the southern rim of the Basin. At the head of the Santa Clara Fork, and in the Vegas de Santa Clara, we crossed the ridge which parted the two systems of waters. We entered the Basin at that point, and have travelled in it ever since, having its southeastern rim (the Wahsatch mountain) on the right, and crossing the streams which flow down into it. The existence of the Basin is, therefore, an established fact in my mind ; its extent and contents are yet to be better ascertained. It cannot be less than four or five hundred miles each way, and must lie principally in the Alta California ; the demarcation latitude of  $42^{\circ}$  probably cutting a segment from the north part of the rim. Of its interior, but little is known. It is called a

*desert*, and, from what I saw of it, sterility may be its prominent characteristic; but where there is so much water, there must be some *oasis*. The great river and the great lake reported may not be equal to the report; but where there is so much snow, there must be streams; and where there is no outlet, there must be lakes to hold the accumulated waters, or sands to swallow them up. In this eastern part of the basin, containing Sevier, Utah, and the Great Salt lakes, and the rivers and creeks falling into them, we know there is good soil and good grass, adapted to civilized settlements. In the western part, on Salmon-trout River, and some other streams, the same remark may be made.

“The contents of this Great Basin are yet to be examined. That it is peopled, we know; but miserably and sparsely. From all that I heard and saw, I should say that humanity here appeared in its lowest form, and in its most elementary state. Dispersed in single families; without fire-arms; eating seeds and insects; digging roots, (and hence their name;) such is the condition of the greater part. Others are a degree higher, and live in communities upon some lake or river that supplies fish, and from which they repulse the miserable *digger*. The rabbit is the largest animal known in this desert; its flesh affords a little meat; and their bag-like covering is made of its skins. The wild sage is

their only wood, and here it is of extraordinary size—sometimes a foot in diameter, and six or eight feet high. It serves for fuel, for building material, for shelter to the rabbits, and for some sort of covering for the feet and legs in cold weather. Such are the accounts of the inhabitants and productions of the Great Basin; and which, though imperfect, must have some foundation, and excite our desire to know the whole.

“The whole idea of such a desert and such a people, is a novelty in our country, and excites Asiatic, not American ideas. Interior basins, with their own systems of lakes and rivers, and often sterile, are common enough in Asia; people in the elementary state of families, living in deserts, with no other occupation than the mere animal search for food, may still be seen in that ancient quarter of the globe; but in America such things are new and strange, unknown and unsuspected, and discredited when related. But I flatter myself that what is discovered, though not enough to satisfy curiosity, is sufficient to excite it, and that subsequent explorations will complete what has been commenced.

“This account of the Great Basin, it will be remembered, belongs to the Alta California, and has no application to Oregon, whose capabilities may justify a separate remark. Referring to my Journal for particular descriptions, and for sectional boundaries between good and bad districts,



I can only say, in general and comparative terms, that, in that branch of agriculture which implies the cultivation of grains and staple crops, it would be inferior to the Atlantic States, though many parts are superior for wheat, while in the rearing of flocks and herds it would claim a high place. Its grazing capabilities are great; and even in the indigenous grass now there, an element of individual and national wealth may be found. In fact, the valuable grasses begin within one hundred and fifty miles of the Missouri frontier, and extend to the Pacific Ocean. East of the Rocky Mountains, it is the short, curly grass, on which the buffalo delight to feed, (whence its name of buffalo,) and which is still good when dry and apparently dead. West of those mountains it is a larger growth, in clusters, and hence called bunch grass, and which has a second or fall growth. Plains and mountains both exhibit them; and I have seen good pasturage at an elevation of ten thousand feet. In this spontaneous product, the trading or travelling caravans can find subsistence for their animals; and in military operations any number of cavalry may be moved, and any number of cattle may be driven, and thus men and horses be supported on long expeditions, and even in winter in the sheltered situations.

“Commercially, the value of the Oregon country must be great, washed as it is by the North



Pacific Ocean, fronting Asia, producing many of the elements of commerce, mild and healthy in its climate, and becoming, as it naturally will, a thoroughfare for the East India and China trade."

Having examined the Three Parks, or coves in the mountains, where the great rivers, the Platte, the Arkansas, and the Colorado severally take their rise, Mr. Fremont continued his route homeward with no further noticeable occurrence, except an occasional encounter with armed bands of Indians, who, always finding him ready to fight, limited their demonstrations to mere preliminary bravadoes. When within a fortnight of the end of the journey, the river suddenly overflowed its banks one night, and nearly all the perishable collections that the hard labor of many months had accumulated, were destroyed in a moment.

The Report of Lieut. Fremont's Second Expedition concludes as follows:—

"Here ended our land journey; and the day following our arrival, we found ourselves on board a steamboat, rapidly gliding down the broad Missouri. Our travel-worn animals had not been sold and dispersed over the country to renewed labor, but were placed at good pasturage on the frontier, and are now ready to do their part in the coming expedition.

"On the 6th of August we arrived at St.

Louis, where the party was finally disbanded, a greater number of the men having their homes in the neighborhood.

“ Andreas Fuentes also remained here, having readily found employment for the winter, and is one of the men engaged to accompany me the present year.

“ Pablo Hernandez remains in the family of Senator Benton, where he is well taken care of, and conciliates good-will by his docility, intelligence, and amiability. General Almonte, the Mexican Minister at Washington, to whom he was of course made known, kindly offered to take charge of him, and to carry him back to Mexico; but the boy preferred to remain where he was until he got an education, for which he shows equal ardor and aptitude.

“ Our Chinook Indian had his wish to see the whites fully gratified. He accompanied me to Washington, and, after remaining several months at the Columbia College, was sent by the Indian Department to Philadelphia, where, among other things, he learned to read and write well, and speak the English language with some fluency.

“ He will accompany me in a few days to the frontier of Missouri, whence he will be sent with some one of the emigrant companies to the village at the Dalles of the Columbia.”

Appended to the Reports of the First and Second Expeditions, as published together, in

1845, by order of Congress, besides the usual scientific tables, records, specimens, and calculations, there is a map, of which the author gives the following account, in the preface.

“ This map may have a meagre and skeleton appearance to the general eye, but is expected to be more valuable to science on that account, being wholly founded upon positive data and actual operations in the field. About ten thousand miles of actual travelling and traversing in the wilderness which lies between the frontiers of Missouri and the shores of the Pacific, almost every camping station being the scene of astronomical or barometrical observations, furnish the materials out of which this map has been constructed. Nothing supposititious has been admitted upon it; so that, connecting with Capt. Wilkes’s survey of the mouth of the Columbia, and with the authentic surveys of the State of Missouri, it fills up the vast geographical chasm between these two remote points, and presents a connected and accurate view of our continent from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean.

“ To this geographical map, delineating the face of the country over which we travelled, there is added another in profile, showing the elevations, or the rise and fall of the country from the Mississippi to the Pacific. East of the Rocky Mountains, two of these profile views are given,—one from St. Louis to the South Pass,

the other from the mouth of the Great Platte to the same point. The latter is the shortest; and following, as it does, the regular descent of the river, and being seven hundred miles west of the Mississippi, it may be that the eastern *terminus* of this line may furnish the point at which the steamboat and the steam-car may hereafter meet and exchange cargoes in their magic flight across this continent. These profile views, following the travelling routes, of course follow the lowest and levellest lines, and pass the mountain at the point of its greatest depression; but to complete the view, and to show the highest points as well as the lowest levels, many lofty peaks are sketched at their proper elevations, towering many thousands of feet above the travelling line. It may here be excusable to suggest that these profile maps here exhibited are, perhaps, the most extended work of the kind ever constructed, being from St. Louis (according to the route we travelled) near sixteen hundred miles to the South Pass; from the mouth of the Great Platte to the same Pass, about one thousand more; and then another sixteen hundred from that Pass to the tide-water of the Oregon; in all, about four thousand miles of profile mapping, founded upon nearly four hundred barometrical positions, with views sketched and facts noted in the field as we went."

## CHAPTER IV.

THIRD EXPEDITION —ARKANSAS—GREAT BASIN—  
HAWKS PEAK ON THE SIERRA—TLAMATH LAKE.

ON the 29th of January, 1845, President Tyler, with the advice and consent of the Senate of the United States, conferred upon Lieut. Fremont a Brevet commission of Captain in the corps of Topographical Engineers. He was brevetted to a First Lieutenancy and a Captaincy, at the same time. For this distinguished compliment he was indebted, in part, to the instrumentality of the commanding General of the Army.

In the fall of that year he started on his Third Expedition. This was his last under the authority of the Government. It terminated in operations and results so remote from its design, as a mere exploration, and led to such extraordinary, engrossing, and complicated engagements, that the publication of a full report has been

necessarily postponed. The two next expeditions were at his own cost, and unconnected altogether with the Government. It is understood that he is availing himself of every opportunity of leisure, to prepare for the press a thorough and complete Report of the last three expeditions. The materials are in his hands, in field notes, daily journals, and all the elements of astronomical, meteorological, and other scientific observations. He carried on his last exploration a daguerreotype apparatus, and has a very extensive set of plates, exhibiting, by that infallible process, the lines and features of the wild scenery and modes of life in the interior regions of the continent. Besides these he has a collection of pencil sketches, of great excellence of execution, and colored drawings made upon the spot, with specimens of objects natural and artificial, gathered in his long wanderings. The publication of this work will complete his service, and his fame, as a scientific explorer. Until that is done, only a brief and fragmentary account can be given of the last expeditions.

He went out, in the third expedition, by the northern head waters of the Arkansas, then the boundary line of the country, to the south side of the Great Salt Lake, and thence directly across the central basin, towards California, in a route of which he was the first explorer. Upon reaching the neighborhood of the Sierra Nevada,



he concluded that, in the worn and weakened condition of his men and animals, they would not be able to surmount the barrier at that point; and, being short of provisions, it was necessary to get as speedily as possible into the country beyond, where supplies could be obtained. He therefore divided his party. Leaving all the provisions with the main body of it, he directed them to follow along the eastern border of the Sierra, towards the South, to a certain pass, which he named; while, with a selected company of fifteen men, entirely unencumbered, he would attempt to scale the mountains, get provisions on the other side at Sutter's, and go to their relief on the appointed route. The plan, so far as his part was concerned, entirely succeeded. He got across the mountains, with his light party, in six hours, proceeded to Sutter's, purchased fifty cattle, and drove them down the western side of the Sierra to meet the main body of his people. Unfortunately they mistook the pass, misled by a similarity of name; wandered far on to a distant pass, towards the south, and at last found their way through. Fremont remained waiting and roaming for them, in the wild and mountainous country along the western slope of the Sierra, having frequent hard fights with the savage tribes that infested them, until his cattle were wasted by exhaustion, and destroyed by injuries among the sharp rocks. Finally, he

abandoned the search, and going down to the California settlements, learned that his company, after many sufferings, had come into the country by a different route from that directed by him, quite remote from the point where he had expected to meet them. They had been placed under the command of Joseph Walker, an experienced mountaineer and excellent traveller, whose name is given to one of the principal passes through the mountain ranges. The mistake of the route was no fault of his. It seems that there are two rivers of the same name. Fremont knew of one, Walker of the other; and neither knew that there was more than one. Orders were sent to Walker to go, with his party, to San Jose, and there remain until Fremont should join them. Wishing to avoid all occasion of ill-will, or suspicion, on the part of the Mexican authorities in California, he went alone to Monterey, and made himself known to Mr. Larkin, the consul of the United States in that city, and, accompanied by him, waited upon Alvarado, the Alcalde, Manuel Castro, the Prefecto, and Carlos Castro, the commanding general, who constituted the leading authorities of the country. He communicated his object in coming into California, stating that he had not a single soldier of the United States army in his party, and that his sole purpose was a scientific exploration of the continent, with a view of ascertaining the best

mode of establishing a commercial intercourse between the Atlantic and Pacific regions. He requested permission to winter in the country, recruit his company, and continue his explorations. His request was granted. He then repaired to his party at San Jose, where they remained several weeks.

Shortly after this interview with General Castro, orders were received by that officer to drive Captain Fremont out of the country, or send him prisoner to the city of Mexico. Of these orders Fremont had no knowledge until a long time afterwards. The first intimation he had of any unfriendly feeling towards him, was in certain movements, at various points, which seemed to have a threatening aspect, as if aimed at him. But the interview with Castro, and the other high officers at head quarters, was so recent, and had been so friendly and cordial, that he could hardly believe that the appearances that had attracted his attention were meant against him. At length, however, on the 3d of March, when within about twenty-five miles of Monterey, he was met by an officer, who had a detachment of eighty dragoons in his rear to enforce his message, with a letter from Castro, ordering him, without any explanation, peremptorily, out of the country. The communication was in such a tone, so entirely in violation of the arrangement made at Monterey, on his visit to the

authorities of the country, in that place; and the demonstrations were, all around, of such a belligerent look and character, that Captain Fremont felt no disposition to pay a hurried obedience to the order. He marched, with his party, directly to a lofty hill, called Hawks Peak. It commanded a view, to a great extent, all around the country. In that pure atmosphere, distant objects were clearly seen, and brought minutely to view by the aid of spy-glasses. It was evident that preparations were actively going on to attack him. The enemy was seen scaling his guns, and gathering Californians and Indians into his ranks. Captain Fremont at once proceeded to fortify his position, and erected a staff on its highest point, forty feet in length, and unfurled from it the flag of his country. His own spirit pervaded his whole party. Although few in number, and far away from aid, in the heart of a foreign country, thus suddenly assuming a hostile attitude towards them, they were determined to defend themselves against any assault, by however great a force it might be made, and were thoroughly prepared to meet the last extremity.

On the 9th, Consul Larkin succeeded in effecting a communication with Fremont, informing him of the preparations going on to attack him. The following note, in pencil, was sent in reply.

“MY DEAR SIR: I this moment received your

letters, and, without waiting to read them, acknowledge the receipt, which the courier requires immediately. I am making myself as strong as possible, in the intention that if we are unjustly attacked, we will fight to extremity and refuse quarter, trusting to our country to avenge our death. No one has reached our camp, and, from the heights, we are able to see troops (with the glass) mustering at St. John's, and preparing cannon. I thank you for your kindness and good wishes, and would write more at length as to my intentions did I not fear that my letter would be intercepted. We have, in nowise, done wrong to the people or the authorities of the country; and, if we are hemmed in and assaulted here, we will die, every man of us, under the flag of our country.

Very truly yours,

J. C. FREMONT.

P. S. I am encamped on the top of the Sierra, at the head waters of a stream which strikes the road to Monterey at the house of Don Joaquin Gomes.

Thomas O. Larkin, Esq., Consul for the United States at Monterey."

The Delawares kept an unfailing watch from every peak, or lofty crag; and with the instinctive and long-practised vigilance, clear sightedness, and quick discernment of their race, gave notice of every movement in all directions. One



morning at sunrise every thing indicated a near impending assault, by overwhelming numbers. Fremont addressed his people, who assured him with one voice that they were ready to meet death with him on the spot rather than surrender. The Delawares prepared themselves at once for their last battle. They arrayed themselves in their full finery, put their red war paint on themselves and on their horses, and with all their weapons in order, made the circuit of the camp, singing their war and death songs, their chargers prancing, in apparent sympathy with their riders in the solemn but exultant enthusiasm of the occasion. But the enemy shrunk from the crisis. On another occasion, they were discovered approaching, by moonlight. Fremont selected twenty-five of his men, and went out to meet them. They fled in surprise as he dashed down upon them. At another time, he went out during the day with a select band to reconnoitre, and ascertain more particularly the intentions of the enemy. After several days, as Castro ventured upon no attack, he concluded to move from his position at Hawks Peak. His people urged him strenuously to allow them to make a night assault upon Castro's camp, but he refused to gratify them. He was determined to originate no hostile movement, but confine himself wholly to the resistance of violence, and to such a course as would show that his only



object was to have it understood that he was not to be driven out of the country by any such summary and intimidating methods as Castro had adopted. He therefore moved down into the San Joaquin Valley, and by moderate and deliberate marches turned up through North California towards Oregon and the Columbia River.

Colonel Benton, in a speech in the Senate, characterized the course of Fremont, in hoisting the flag of his country at Hawks Peak, in well-deserved and well-expressed language:—

“Such was the reason for raising the flag. It was raised at the approach of danger; it was taken down when danger disappeared. It was well and nobly done, and worthy of our admiration. Sixty of our countrymen, three thousand miles from home, in sight of the Pacific Ocean, appealing to the flag of their country, unfurling it on the mountain-top, and determined to die under it, before they would submit to unjust aggression.”

At the close of Fremont's second expedition, Carson, in taking leave of him, promised, in case a third expedition were organized, to join it. In the mean time he had settled near Taos. On reaching Bent's Fort, when going out on his third expedition, Fremont sent a message reminding him of his promise, and saying that he would wait there for him. Although Carson

had purchased a farm, intending thenceforth to lead a quiet life—so sacred did he regard his promise, and so strong was his affection for his old commander—he instantly sold his house and land, at a very considerable sacrifice, and joined the expedition in four days after receiving Fremont's note. He put his family under the care of Governor Bent during his absence. Their wives were sisters. When afterwards the Indians fell upon Taos, massacring, among others, Governor Bent, Mrs. Carson saved her life by flight.

Carson's services were as usual invaluable throughout the third expedition, and signal on many occasions. In withdrawing from California, Fremont had reached the northern end of the Tlamath Lake in Oregon, and was about exploring a new route into the Willhameth Valley. The Tlamath Indians are brave and warlike. They are rendered particularly formidable by their iron arrow-heads and axes, procured from the British trading forts north of the Columbia River. Their barbed arrows cannot be extracted but by cutting the flesh.

On the night of the 8th of May, a couple of horsemen, who did not have the appearance of Indians, were seen approaching in that out of the way and far-off place. They proved to be two of Fremont's companions, in his previous explorations, sent on by that dangerous route to

overtake him, with information that Mr. Gillespie, with three men, was behind, with despatches to him from the Government, that he had been a long time on the route searching for him, had endured much suffering, and encountered many perils by the way. Fremont the next morning took nine men, and making all haste to reach Gillespie, so as to protect his small party from the Indians, rode sixty miles that day, meeting him at its close. The story of that night was narrated by Carson some years afterwards. It will be related now in his words, as then used. When Carson told the story to the gentleman who noted it down at the time, Fremont had become a colonel.

“ Mr. Gillespie had brought the Colonel letters from home,—the first he had had since leaving the States the year before,—and he was up, and kept a large fire burning until after midnight; the rest of us were tired out, and all went to sleep. This was the only night in all our travels; except the one night on the Island in the Salt Lake, that we failed to keep guard; and as the men were so tired, and we expected no attack now that we had fourteen in the party, the Colonel did not like to ask it of them, but sat up late himself. Owens and I were sleeping together, and we were waked at the same time by the licks of the axe that killed our men. At first, I did not know it was that; but I called





Night assault by the Indians.



to Basil, who was that side: 'What's the matter there? What's the fuss about?' He never answered, for he was dead then, poor fellow,—and he never knew what killed him. His head had been cut in, in his sleep; the other groaned a little as he died. The Delawares (we had four with us) were sleeping at that fire, and they sprang up as the Tlamaths charged them. One of them (named Crane) caught up a gun, which was unloaded; but, although he could do no execution, he kept them at bay, fighting like a soldier, and did not give up until he was shot full of arrows, three entering his heart; he died bravely. As soon as I had called out, I saw it was Indians in the camp, and I and Owens together cried out 'Indians.' There were no orders given; things went on too fast, and the Colonel had men with him that did not need to be told their duty. The Colonel and I, Maxwell, Owens, Godey, and Stepp jumped together, we six, and ran to the assistance of our Delawares. I don't know who fired and who didn't; but I think it was Stepp's shot that killed the Tlamath chief; for it was at the crack of Stepp's gun that he fell. He had an English half-axe slung to his wrist by a cord, and there were forty arrows left in his quiver, the most beautiful and warlike arrows I ever saw. He must have been the bravest man among them; from the way he was armed, and judging by his



cap. When the Tlamaths saw him fall, they ran ; but we lay, every man with his rifle cocked, until daylight, expecting another attack.

“ In the morning we found by the tracks that from fifteen to twenty of the Tlamaths had attacked us. They had killed three of our men, (besides Basil and the Delaware, a half-breed Iroquois, named Dennie,) and wounded one of the Delawares, who scalped the chief whom we left where he fell. Our dead men we carried on mules ; but after going about ten miles, we found it impossible to get them any further through the thick timber, and finding a secret place, we buried them under logs and chunks, having no way to dig a grave. It was only a few days before this fight that some of these same Indians had come into our camp ; and, although we had only meat for two days, and felt sure that we should have to eat mules for ten or fifteen days to come, the Colonel divided with them, and even had a mule unpacked to give them some tobacco and knives.”

As Carson states, in the foregoing narrative, the Colonel remained awake, and up, after all others in the encampment had gone to sleep. The letters, which brought him the first intelligence of his family and home, called back reminiscences and started associations that coursed through his mind, kindling its deepest sensibilities. As he gazed upon the dying

embers of the camp fires, his thoughts wandered in a reverie of fancy and emotion. Although the moon was shining brightly above the forest, beneath its branches all was dark, and its recesses impenetrable to the vision. Solemn silence reigned over the scene and the hour. His wearied and faithful people were in profound repose, and he watched that they might rest. It was midnight. Suddenly the horses started as if some danger assailed them. As such alarms often spring from trivial causes, Fremont did not arouse his men, but taking a six-barrel pistol in his hand, went noiselessly around to the various points where the animals were picketed, listened from time to time, and examined all parts of the encampment. All was still, and no danger seemed near. The horses, reassured by his presence, became quiet, and returned to their rest. Having thus reconnoitred the ground, in cautious exploration, he concluded that all was safe. Indeed, he had dismissed the idea of the possibility of danger from Indians at that time. Since the morning he had ridden sixty miles, too rapidly to be followed, and seen none by the way. The two advanced couriers, and after them, Gillespie with only his three remaining men, had just passed unharmed over the country, from the opposite direction, and it seemed quite certain that there could be no enemy in the neighborhood. Convinced by

these considerations, he yielded to silence and fatigue, and had fallen into unconsciousness himself, when, the moon having sunk below the trees, the attack began.

It is not unlikely that, during all the previous hours of that night, savage eyes were upon him, as he mused and watched before the fire. It is always a main point with Indians, in attacking a party, to kill the commander. The Tlamaths were undoubtedly lurking around the camp, when the horses started; and as Fremont went to find the cause of the alarm, they may have lost sight of him, and his life have thus been saved.

To show the profound duplicity and treachery of those Indians, the following statement made by Mr. Gillespie under oath before the committee on military affairs of the Senate of the United States, is presented.

“ I started upon Captain Fremont’s trail upon the 2d of May, much against the earnest appeals and advice of the settlers, who informed me that the Indians, through whose country I would have to pass, were very hostile, and would, in all probability, defeat so small a party. However, considering their fears somewhat exaggerated, I determined to overtake Captain Fremont at all hazards. Upon the 7th of May, finding the signs of the camp very fresh, I ordered two of the men, Neal and Sigler, to proceed ahead

upon the best and fleetest horses, to overtake and inform Captain Fremont of my approach. I arrived at the Tlamath Lake at sunset of the same day. Our provisions were exhausted, and game could not be found. Not being able to ford the river, the outlet of the lake, I determined to encamp upon its banks, hoping to hear the next morning from my men, or receive a message from Captain Fremont, whom I supposed at no great distance from me. We remained here until the morning of the 9th, full forty hours, without any thing to eat, when, at about 8 o'clock, a party of Indians came to us, a chief bringing me a fresh salmon just from the lake. They also brought two canoes, and took us across the lake, and showed us every disposition to be friendly. Riding about 30 miles over the mountains, I came to a party, about sunset, which proved to be Captain Fremont, with nine of his men, who had rode sixty miles that day to meet me."

When Gillespie's men examined the body and countenance of the Indian, left dead in the camp, it was found to be the identical chief, who, the morning before, had brought the fresh salmon to them, and professed such exceeding friendliness of disposition towards them! There can be no doubt that immediately after setting them across the river, and making such an acceptable present to them, he collected his mur-

derous party, and dogged them, unseen, the whole day, indulging the confident purpose of cutting them off at night, which he would have done had not Fremont made his extraordinary effort to meet them. Gillespie, in his testimony, says: "The Indians had followed on my trail, and but for the promptness of Captain Fremont, my small party would have been overpowered by superior numbers, and killed."

This is a specimen of that instantaneous decision of purpose, which has marked the course of Fremont, and from which such consequences have often flowed, as seem to look like an overruling Providence, determining his judgment, in the apparent absence of ordinary considerations and inducements. Upon the arrival of Gillespie's advanced couriers, he instantly, and without a moment's delay, prepared his select troop, and rode 60 miles, feeling that it was necessary to reach him before another night. If he had not done this, he never would have received the communication that carried him back to California, and the sequel will show how disastrously the current of the world's affairs would, in that event, have been turned from its course.

The circumstance of that midnight tragedy in the far-off wilderness that most touches the feeling heart, is the death of Basil. His noble nature has been indicated in some passages of

this memoir. He was in the bloom of life. He was generous, disinterested, and as beautiful as brave. His manly energy and powers of endurance were unsurpassed. His person and character bore the impress of Nature's choicest stamp. The sudden extinction of such a life is an affecting and impressive event. Deeply did his commander and companions mourn his death. When, in distant centuries, a civilized population shall surround the Tlamath Lake, the story of Basil Lajeunesse will give a romantic interest to the shore where his ashes rest.



## CHAPTER V.

NORTH CALIFORNIA—BEAR WAR—CONQUEST OF  
CALIFORNIA—WAH-LAH-WAH-LAH INDIANS—IN-  
SURRECTION—CALIFORNIA BATTALION—INSUR-  
GENTS SURRENDER TO FREMONT—CAPITULATION  
OF COWENGA.

MR. GILLESPIE delivered to Captain Fremont a brief letter of introduction from Mr. Buchanan, Secretary of State. It was not deemed safe to commit to writing the communication he had been sent to make, and for which he had sought Fremont at such hazard, and at so remote a point. It was entrusted to his memory, to be conveyed by word of mouth, and was in substance to this effect: That a rupture between the United States and Mexico being not improbable, it was the wish of the Government that Fremont should keep himself in a favorable position to watch the state of things in California, conciliate the feelings of its people, encourage a friendship with the United States, and do what he could to prevent that country falling into the

hands of Great Britain. In obedience to this suggestion, he began to retrace his steps into California.

On the second day after the murder of Basil and the two Indians, by the Tlamaths, Carson, who was ahead with ten men, came upon their village, containing more than a hundred warriors. Fremont had given orders to send back and let him come up, in case they met Indians. But it was too late to delay a moment, when the enemy was first seen, and Carson, with his small detachment, rushed at once upon the village, and, after a sharp conflict, put the whole to flight. Several of the Tlamaths were killed, and their village destroyed. During the same day there was another encounter with the Indians, in which Carson came very near losing his life. An Indian was seen fixing his arrow to let fly at him. He instantly levelled his rifle, but it snapped, when Fremont, seeing his danger, flew to his rescue, dashed his horse upon the Indian and knocked him over. "I owe my life," as Carson expresses himself, when relating the incident, "I owe my life to them two—the Colonel and Sacramento saved me." Sacramento was a favorite iron-gray horse of Colonel Fremont. He was presented to him by Captain Sutter in 1844, and earned his name by swimming that river at the close of a long day's journey. After bearing his master several times across the con-

continent, he has been honorably discharged. His service performed and his warfare ended, he is now roaming in freedom his native valley. He has rejoined the wild horses of the California plains, and suffers no Indian or hunter to approach him. His master has never attempted to reclaim him, and all efforts on the part of others to capture him have proved fruitless.

When Captain Fremont came into North California, he found the whole country in a state of great alarm. The entire population of California at that period, exclusive of Indians, was estimated at about ten thousand, one fifth of whom were foreigners, chiefly from the United States. General Castro was the military commander, and was actively exerting his influence to aggravate the jealousy of the native Californians towards foreign residents. He had issued a proclamation aimed at Americans particularly, and requiring them to leave the country. It became evident that measures had been for some time secretly concerting among many of the leading Spanish Californians, to transfer the country to the protection and control of Great Britain, and to drive out or exterminate all American settlers; (that is, as the word is universally understood, all settlers from the United States;) to expel them utterly, with their families; and to take possession of their lands. In order to accomplish this more effectually, the Indian tribes

were made to participate in the conspiracy, and instigated to burn and destroy the crops and houses of Americans. This condition of things, of course, spread the utmost alarm among the intended victims of the plot. When Captain Fremont came down into the Sacramento Valley, men, women, and children flocked to him for protection, and appealed to him as a countryman. His means of information were very extensive and reliable. There were many American settlers, who had been several years in the country, intermarrying in some cases with California families, men of education and large property, like Dr. Marsh, and all of them more or less able to discover what was going on, not merely among the people, but in the consultations of the authorities. With them Captain Fremont kept up constant communication.

From these sources of information he obtained intimations of a scheme, the authentic and official records of which he afterwards found in the archives of California, while occupying the government house in Los Angeles.

A Catholic priest, named Eugenio Macnamara, in the year 1845 and the early part of 1846, was domesticated with the British legation at the city of Mexico. During that time he made application for a grant of land for the purpose of establishing a colony in California. He asked for a square league, containing 4,428 acres,

to be given to each family, and that each child of a colonist should have half a square league. The territory to be conveyed to him should be around San Francisco Bay, embrace three thousand square leagues, and include the entire valley of the San Joaquin. He agreed to bring a thousand families at the beginning. His object is stated in his memorial to the Mexican President, in these words:—

“ I propose, with the aid and approbation of your excellency, to place in Upper California a colony of Irish Catholics. I have a triple object in making this proposition. I wish, in the first place, to advance the cause of Catholicism. In the second, to contribute to the happiness of my countrymen. Thirdly, I desire to *put an obstacle in the way of further usurpations on the part of an irreligious and anti-Catholic nation.*”

His proposal was favorably entertained by the central government. It was referred, for a final decision, to the landholders and local authorities of California. Conventions were about being held to perfect the arrangement. Macnamara was landed, from the British frigate Juno, one of Sir George Seymour's fleet, at Santa Barbara, just at this time. Every thing was ripe for a final settlement of the whole matter; and by virtue of this grant of land to Macnamara, the whole country would have passed under British protection.

Some intimations of this deeply devised scheme had reached the public ear, and tended to increase the excitement, alarm, and agitation of the American settlers.

The point was reached at which it became necessary for Fremont to decide. The Indians had begun to burn the crops of the American settlers, and were assembled in a large force of about six hundred warriors, at or near what is known as Redding's Rancho, about thirty-five or forty miles from his encampment. He must either quit the country, and leave the American settlers, with their wives and children, to utter ruin and a fearful fate, or he must step forward as their defender. He must either let that vast region pass into the hands of a foreign power, or take instant possession of it by his own sword. It was a fearful but a great crisis in his life. To head a rebellion in a country with which his own, so far as he then knew, was at peace, was assuming a most serious responsibility. But the question was then and there to be decided. He decided it in favor of those who sought his protection, and took the responsibility of his position at once. He called his men together, laid before them the state of the case, and referred to the destruction impending over those residents of California who were their countrymen. He told them that he had no right, as a United States officer, to resist the authorities, or



make war upon the subjects, of a government with which his country was at peace. He would however release them, for the time being, from the conditions of their service under him as a United States officer, and relinquish his command. If they wished to volunteer in defence of the American settlers and their families, they were at liberty to do so. He concluded by announcing that he should himself do it forthwith. They unanimously declared their readiness to join him, and appointed him their commander. He instantly marched against the Indians, leaving about half a dozen men to defend the camp. He broke up and dispersed five villages in one day, in such rapid succession that notice of his approach could not be sent forward; reached their assembled force before sundown; found them engaged in their war dance, in black paint and white feathers, preparatory to their meditated blow upon the settlers; attacked them on sight; and, at the first charge, routed and scattered them, driving them into the river and the woods. At a single stroke, in one day, he thus utterly annihilated the Indian combination, and rescued the settlers from threatening ruin, without the loss of a man.

He then returned to camp, and removed his force to a place called the Buttes, about sixty miles above Sutter's Settlement. From that point he put himself into communication with all friendly



THE BATTLE OF COTTON



to the movement. Not long after he received information that Castro had assembled about 400 men at Santa Clara, and that he had sent an officer, with a detachment, to Sonoma, to procure horses to complete the equipment of his force. Fremont instantly started a small body of men, who volunteered for the service, and chose Ezekiel Merritt for their leader, to intercept Castro's detachment on its return. The service was gallantly executed, and with entire success. The whole body, horses and all, was captured. The prisoners were released, but the horses brought in.

By rapid and vigorous movements Castro's forces were all driven from the country north of the bay of San Francisco. At Sonoma, General Vallejo, two colonels, and other prisoners were taken. A squadron of eighty men, under Captain De la Torre, remained for a short time on a peninsula, at Saucelito, on the northern side of the bay, directly opposite Castro's encampment on the east side; but he was pressed so hard, that he abandoned his horses, and escaped in launches across the bay to Castro. Fremont found there a bark from the Eastern states, commanded by a patriotic American, named David Phelps, who, entering heartily into the business, lent him his launch, into which he jumped, with twelve men, and rowed over to San Francisco, about eight miles, where there was a fort with a bat-

tery of guns, mostly brass field-pieces, which they spiked, employing for the purpose steel files, used for sharpening knives, which Captain Phelps happened to have on board his bark.

Having thus established the independence of North California, Fremont sent a message to Castro, that as he could not get his horses over the bay, if he would wait for him, he would pass around its head as quickly as possible, and meet him where he was at Santa Clara, and end the contest for the country at once.

On his way round, finding himself at Sonoma on the 4th of July, the day was duly celebrated. On the next day, a great concourse of people, American settlers, and others sympathizing in the cause, having come to meet and welcome him, he declared the country Independent, and the flag of the free state of California, a grizzly bear on a white field, was unfurled.

By the celerity of these bold movements, the Indian enemy was annihilated, the settlers saved from massacre, and their fields from desolation; the power of Mexico over North California was broken down forever; and, as we shall soon see, the whole of that golden empire secured to the United States.

On the 10th of July, Fremont reached, on his way to Santa Clara, in the fulfilment of his promise to Castro, the nearest point at which cavalry could get around the head of the bay,







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at Sutter's Fort. About sunset an express reached him from Commodore Sloat, announcing his capture of Monterey. The next morning, at sunrise, he hoisted the flag of the American Union at the fort, under a national salute, and with great rejoicings. Thus ended what was called the "Bear war."

He then moved down with great celerity along the south side of the bay. His troop consisted of 160 mounted riflemen. Castro fled before him, and on the 19th of July he reached Monterey. Of his entrance into that city a very graphic account is given by Lieutenant the Hon. Frederick Walpole, of the Royal Navy, in a work published in London, with the following title: "Four years in the Pacific; in her Majesty's ship 'Collingwood,' from 1844 to 1848."

"During our stay in Monterey," says Lieutenant Walpole, "Captain Fremont and his party arrived. They naturally excited curiosity. Here were true trappers, the class that produced the heroes of Fenimore Cooper's best works. These men had passed years in the wilds, living upon their own resources; they were a curious set. A vast cloud of dust appeared first, and thence in long file emerged this wildest wild party. Fremont rode ahead, a spare, active-looking man, with such an eye! He was dressed in a blouse and leggings, and wore a felt hat. After him came five Delaware Indians, who were his

body-guard, and have been with him through all his wanderings; they had charge of two baggage horses. The rest, many of them blacker than the Indians, rode two and two, the rifle held by one hand across the pommel of the saddle. Thirty-nine of them are his regular men, the rest are loafers picked up lately; his original men are principally backwoodsmen, from the State of Tennessee and the banks of the upper waters of the Missouri. He has one or two with him who enjoy a high reputation in the prairies. Kit Carson is as well known there as the duke is in Europe. The dress of these men was principally a long loose coat of deer skin, tied with thongs in front; trowsers of the same, of their own manufacture, which, when wet through, they take off, scrape well inside with a knife, and put on as soon as dry; the saddles were of various fashions, though these and a large drove of horses, and a brass field-gun, were things they had picked up about California. They are allowed no liquor, tea and sugar only; this, no doubt, has much to do with their good conduct; and the discipline, too, is very strict. They were marched up to an open space on the hills near the town, under some large firs, and there took up their quarters, in messes of six or seven, in the open air. The Indians lay beside their leader. One man, a doctor, six feet six high, was an odd-looking fellow. May I never come under his hands!

“In justice to the Americans I must say, they seemed to treat the natives well, and their authority extended every protection to them.

“The butts of the trappers’ rifles resemble a Turkish musket, therefore fit light to the shoulder; they are very long and very heavy, carry ball about thirty-eight to the pound. A stick a little longer than the barrel is carried in the bore, in which it fits tightly; this keeps the bullet from moving, and in firing, which they do in a crouching position, they use it as a rest.”

A lieutenant in the American Navy, (now a commander,) George Minor, under examination by the military committee of the United States Senate, described the impression made upon him, by Fremont’s entrance into Monterey, in these words, taken from his deposition:—

“The undersigned was on duty on shore when Captain Fremont arrived with his force at Monterey, from the North. The undersigned believes that the appearance of this body of men, and the well-known character of its commander, not only made a strong impression upon the British Admiral and officers, but an equally impressive and more happy one upon those of the American Navy then in Monterey. For himself, the undersigned can say, that after he had seen Captain Fremont’s command, all his doubts about the conquest of California were removed.”

The vital importance to this country of Cap-

tain Fremont's bold measures in North California is demonstrated by a few dates and facts, and some obvious reflections upon them.

Commodore Sloat with an American, and Admiral Sir George Seymour with a British, squadron, had, for several weeks, been at anchor in Mazatlan, a Mexican port on the Pacific, waiting to catch the first intelligence of the breaking out of hostilities between that Republic and the United States. Commodore Sloat got the first intelligence, and started for California. Sir George Seymour followed. The Commodore arrived first, entering the harbor of Monterey, on the 2d of July, 1846. He did not then take possession of the place. He probably had no thought of doing it, as appears by his last letter to the Secretary of the Navy, dated June 6, just one month before, and written at Mazatlan, in which he says: "Since my No. 50, of the 31st of May, I have upon more mature reflection, come to the conclusion that your instructions of the 24th of June last, and every subsequent order, will not justify my taking possession of any part of California, or any hostile measure against Mexico, (notwithstanding their attack upon our troops,) as neither party has declared war." On the 5th of July, the third day after his entering the port, a launch arrived belonging to the United States ship Portsmouth, Commander Montgomery, then lying in San Francisco Bay,



bringing information of Fremont's operations in North California. Commodore Sloat very naturally supposed that Fremont was acting under instructions, and that supposition led to the change of purpose which he stated in a letter, dated July 6, and sent by the returning launch to Commander Montgomery. In it he says: "Since I wrote you last evening, I have determined to hoist the flag of the United States at this place, to-morrow, as I would prefer being sacrificed for doing too much than too little. If you consider you have sufficient force, or if Fremont will join you, you will hoist the flag of the United States at Yerba Buena, or any other proper place, and take possession, in the name of the United States, of the fort, and that portion of the country."

Accordingly, on the next day, July 7, he hoisted the American flag over Monterey. Sir George Seymour arrived in the "Collingwood," of 80 guns, on the 15th or 16th of July.

These dates show that Commodore Sloat took possession of Monterey, on the 7th, in consequence of the information he received on the 5th of Fremont's operations, as, indeed, he declared at the time. If the American flag had not been flying over Monterey, when Sir George Seymour arrived, it is impossible to estimate the mischievous consequences that would have ensued. Commodore Sloat would, undoubtedly, have



resisted with the bravery of a tried veteran, any forcible attempt of Sir George to take the place, but it would have been impossible for him to have prevented a voluntary transference of the country to the protection of Great Britain, in fulfilment of the arrangements before entered into by its leading inhabitants and authorities.

That the country was saved by Fremont's operations, from being in that way brought under British dominion, was the judgment, at the time, of all acquainted with the circumstances.

Captain Samuel Hensley, declared under oath to the military committee of the Senate, to this effect.

"I did understand from general report that the authorities of California were about to grant certain tracts of land in California to an Irish priest, for the purpose of establishing a colony of British subjects, the said priest, Macnamara, having been brought to California in an English vessel of war; and my impression is that the timely movements on the part of the settlers in the north, Colonel Fremont and others, prevented the execution of the transfer."

Similar testimony was given by many others. It seems that Macnamara was with Sir George Seymour at Monterey. But it was too late. The war between Mexico and the United States had undoubtedly begun. The American flag was floating over California. No neutral power

had a right to interfere; and the whole scheme of Macnamara's grant, the Irish colony, and a British Protectorate, was scattered to the winds. This, then, is the sum of the whole matter.

The hoisting of our flag at Monterey, on the 7th of July, 1846, saved California and the Pacific coast to the United States, and prevented a disastrous collision between this country and Great Britain. That flag was hoisted in consequence of Fremont's gallant achievements in North California. He is therefore entitled to the glory of having saved California from falling into the hands of a foreign power, and secured the extension of our Union over the whole breadth of the continent, from shore to shore.

Immediately after the events just related, Commodore Sloat sailed for the United States, leaving Commodore Stockton, who had arrived a few days before, in command. Fremont, with his volunteers, embarked on board the sloop-of-war Cyane for San Diego. Landing there, he marched to Los Angeles, the then capital of California. Commodore Stockton, having landed his force at San Pedro, reached Los Angeles first, and, on the 17th of August, completed and proclaimed the conquest of California. Castro fled to Sonora.

Fremont continued to act under Commodore Stockton, receiving various successive appointments from him, as major of the California

battalion, afterwards military commandant of California, and finally governor and commander-in-chief in California. Early in September, Captain Fremont left Los Angeles. A few weeks afterwards, an extensive insurrection broke out in southern California. Fremont, who had returned to the Sacramento country, immediately set about raising a battalion among the settlers there to aid in its suppression.

At this time an additional panic arose from the report of an Indian invasion from the north. It was said that 1,000 Wah-lah-wah-lahs were advancing to attack Sutter's Fort. The whole country was aroused, and every element of disposable force was drawn out to meet the threatened danger. Fremont had already assembled a body of several hundred western riflemen towards the completion of his California battalion, when the news reached him. He was quite confident that the story was exaggerated; but it was necessary to restore security in the northern frontier. He took three tried men with him, and went directly to meet the Wah-lah-wah-lahs. He found them much less numerous than had been represented, but assembled in considerable force, and in a state of the greatest exasperation. He went, with his three men, directly into their midst. One of them knew him, and all gathered round him to

tell their wrongs. They had been robbed, and one of their best young men killed, by the whites. He promised them redress if they would follow his advice. He told them that he was going to the south, and could not attend to them until the spring, but that he would then meet them, at a place agreed upon, and have justice done them. He advised them, in the mean time, to go off on a winter hunt, said that he would let one of his own men go with them, to hold over them the United States flag, and that whoever struck that flag struck him. They were perfectly subdued by his talk, and manner of treating them: at once gave up their plan of attacking the whites; and agreed to go off on a winter hunt. They gave him ten of their young braves to go with him, who proved themselves among the best in his battalion. In the spring of the year, he met them, although at a great inconvenience, and gave them of his own horses until they were satisfied. In this way he not only stopped an Indian war, and recruited his own ranks, but he taught a lesson which it would be well to have inculcated upon those who undertake to grapple with our Indian difficulties, and enforced upon the administration of that department of our government.

On the 12th of October, Fremont, with his battalion, arrived at San Francisco. He there

embarked his command, in the ship *Sterling*, to go down the coast to Santa Barbara. He left his horses, intending to remount his men, in the south. Two days out, he fell in with the "*Vandalia*," a merchant ship, and learned that no horses could be had below, the Californians having driven their entire stock into the interior. He immediately determined to return to Monterey and make the march over land. While in Monterey, on the 27th of October, he learned that he had been appointed a lieutenant-colonel of a rifle regiment in the army of the United States. His commission was dated May 29, and signed by President Polk.

As this appointment—by which one who had originally entered the army in an irregular way, taken from the civil service, vaulted over the heads of so many—may possibly have had something to do with certain unpleasant occurrences afterwards, the grounds on which it was made must be borne in mind. They were well stated in one of the public journals at the time, which expresses his eminent qualifications, as follows: "His intimate knowledge of the country, in which the regiment was designed to serve, acquired by his indefatigable explorations of the whole extent of it; his being accustomed to face danger in every form; his induration to the hardships of the wilderness; and his knowledge of the character of the tribes that wander over those desolate regions."



Having despatched a courier to the Sacramento Valley, to fill up his troops and obtain additional supplies, he made all the necessary preparations for an arduous winter march. In the mean time the insurrection had assumed a formidable character. A party of four hundred American sailors and marines, on their way from San Pedro to Los Angeles, were beaten back, with the loss of six men killed, by a strong force of Californians. Los Angeles and Santa Barbara were in their hands. Larkin, the United States consul, had been taken prisoner. Captains Burroughs and Foster and Mr. Eames, were killed in a severe skirmish while escorting a lot of horses to Fremont's camp. Captain Burroughs, on this occasion, rode Fremont's horse, Sacramento. When the captain fell, he was in front of his men. The sagacious animal seemed to comprehend fully the relations of the fight. Immediately, upon losing his rider, he dashed back to his own party, wheeled into the ranks, and was impatient to bear another hero against the foe. On this occasion, one of the Wah-lah-wah-lah Indians performed a remarkable feat of heroism. He volunteered to carry intelligence to Col. Fremont of the attack. He was closely pursued by the enemy, one of whom, having nearly overtaken him, drove his lance at him; in trying to parry it, he received it through his hand; with



the other hand he grasped his tomahawk, and in an instant clave the skull of his pursuer. Two others overtook him and shared the same fate in succession. He rode on until his horse gave out, and then reached Monterey on foot.

Col. Fremont immediately started. His force consisted of four hundred mounted men, and three pieces of artillery under the command of Lieut. McLane of the navy. A large drove of beef cattle followed to serve as provisions on the march. At San Juan, on the 29th of November, a party of emigrants, who had recently crossed the country, made a most valuable accession to his force, comprising many men of superior intelligence and standing, and contributing essentially to the energy of the expedition. One of them, Edwin Bryant, who, in 1849, published a work on California, served as a first lieutenant of one of the companies, and became alcalde of San Francisco. He gives the following account of the regiment:—

“There are no plumes nodding over brazen helmets, nor coats of broadcloth spangled with lace and buttons ; a broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat, a shirt of blue flannel or buckskin, with pantaloons and moccasins of the same, all generally much the worse for wear, and smeared with mud and dust, make up the costume of the party, officers as well as men. A leathern girdle surrounds the waist, from which are suspended a

bowie and a hunter's knife, and sometimes a brace of pistols. These, with the rifle and holster pistols, are the arms carried by officers and privates. A single bugle composes the band."

The staff-officers were Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. Fremont, commanding; A. H. Gillespie, Major; P. B. Reading, Paymaster; Henry King, Commissary; J. R. Snyder, Quartermaster; William H. Russell, Ordnance Officer; J. Talbot, Adjutant; and J. J. Myers, Sergeant-Major.

In the course of his narrative of the march, Mr. Bryant bestows this encomium upon the regiment, which all other accounts amply justify:—

"The men composing the California battalion have been drawn from many sources, and are roughly clad and weather-beaten in their exterior appearance; but I feel it but justice to state my belief, that no military party ever passed through an enemy's country and observed the same strict regard for the rights of its population. I never heard of an outrage or even a trespass being committed by one of the American volunteers during our entire march. Every American appeared to understand perfectly the duty which he owed to himself and others in this respect, and the deportment of the battalion might be cited as a model for imitation."

After marching one hundred and fifty miles,

they surprised, in a night of pitchy darkness, San Louis Obispo, the seat of a district commandant, without firing a gun, and captured Don Jesus Pico, the head of the insurrection in that quarter. Two days afterwards, December 16th, Pico was tried by a court-martial, and condemned to death, for breaking his parole. The next day, about an hour before noon, at which time the execution was to take place, a procession of females, headed by a lady of fine appearance, proceeded to the quarters of Col. Fremont, and with all the fervor natural to a mother, wife, children, and near relatives, under such circumstances, implored for mercy, and, prostrate and in tears, begged for the life of the convict. Their supplication was granted. Pico, who had borne himself with perfect coolness and firmness at the trial, and had prepared to die with "the solemn dignity of a Spaniard," when brought in and informed of his pardon, flung himself with unrestrained emotion before Col. Fremont, clasped his knees, swore eternal fidelity, and begged the privilege of fighting and dying for him.

His subsequent conduct proved him faithful to his pledge. Some have blamed Col. Fremont for his clemency on this occasion; but he knew better than they know the great and deep laws of our nature. He knew well the people of California, who were more truly subdued by

that act of mercy, than by all the bloodshed of battle, and all the terrors of our power.

On the 27th of December, the battalion entered without resistance the town of Santa Barbara, where it remained recruiting until the 3d of January, 1847. On the 11th of January, while pursuing their march, they were met by two Californians, riding in great haste, bare-headed, who informed them that the American forces, under Commodore Stockton, had retaken Los Angeles, after a victorious engagement with the insurgent forces. The enemy's force was understood to be in the vicinity, and the next day two California officers came into camp to treat for peace. After full consultation, articles were agreed upon on the 13th of January, 1847. They stipulated that all Californians should deliver up their arms, return peaceably to their homes, not take up arms again during the war between the United States and Mexico, and assist and aid in keeping the country in a state of peace and tranquillity. Any Californian or citizen of Mexico, who might desire to do so, was to be permitted to leave the country, and none be required to take the oath of allegiance to the United States, until a treaty of peace should be signed and made between the United States and Mexico. The articles of capitulation were signed by officers duly commissioned for the purpose, and approved by "J. C. Fremont,

Lieutenant-Colonel U. S. Army, and Military Commandant of California, and by Andres Pico, Commandant of Squadron and Chief of the National Forces of California."

This was the "Capitulation of Cowenga." It terminated the war so far as California was concerned. No hostile arm was ever again lifted, except in the ordinary form of local Indian outbreaks, within the limits of that State, against the authority of the United States. It secured reconciliation as well as peace. It is in evidence, on the records of the government, that the final conquest of California could not have been accomplished by any forces then on the Pacific coast, without the aid of the California battalion; and that, had it not been consummated by the Treaty of Cowenga, a "bloody, vexatious, and predatory warfare" would surely have been protracted for an indefinite length of time. The whole western slope of the Sierra Nevada would have afforded safe retreats, inaccessible to naval and even regular military forces, from which ravaging parties would have rushed down upon the plains, and where insurrectionary movements would have been fomented perpetually. Fremont terrified the Californians and the Indians by the celerity and boldness of his movements, and he conquered their hearts by the good conduct of his men, and the moderation and clemency of his policy.



In a despatch from General Kearney to the War Department at Washington, dated Ciudad de los Angeles, January 14, 1847, he says :—

“ This morning, Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont, of the regiment of mounted riflemen, reached here with four hundred volunteers from the Sacramento; the enemy capitulated with him yesterday, near San Fernando, agreeing to lay down their arms, and we have now the prospect of having peace and quietness in this country, which I hope may not be interrupted again.”

Mr. Bryant, in his book, gives a minute account of the course of the California battalion from Monterey to Los Angeles. It was in mid-winter, over a rough country, in rain and storm, one of the hardest marches ever made, exhausting to the strength of men, and most destructive to the animals. On one occasion it seemed as if all would sink under fatigue and suffering. Fremont thus refers to it, in a document drawn out in subsequent proceedings: “ We pursued our march, passing the towns on the way without collision with the people, but with great labor from the state of the roads and rains. On Christmas day, 1846, we struggled on the Santa Barbara Mountain in a tempest of chilling rains and winds, in which a hundred horses perished; but the men stood to it, and I mention it to their honor.”



## CHAPTER VI.

### ARRIVAL OF GENERAL KEARNEY—DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN COMMANDERS—ARREST—COURT-MAR- TIAL.

It is necessary at this point to go back a few months. After completing the original conquest of California, taking possession of Ciudad de los Angeles, its capital, and providing for the administration of a civil and military government over it, Commodore Stockton and Colonel Fremont sent Carson, with fifteen men, to Washington with despatches, relating all that had taken place. He was to make the journey and return in 140 days, subsisting on his mules as he went. Having crossed the wilderness in about thirty days, he met General Kearney, on his way to California to conquer that country! Upon receiving the intelligence which Carson brought, Kearney divided his command, and with a portion of it continued on towards California, taking Carson back with him. When he reached the borders of California it was at the

height of the insurrectionary movement, and he was met by the enemy in great force. After one or two bloody encounters, he was hemmed in at a particular point, reduced to a state of siege, and for want of grass or water brought to a serious extremity. It was only about thirty miles from San Diego. Carson, and Passed Midshipman Beale, volunteered to go there for relief. Accompanied by a Delaware Indian they crawled at night through the enemy's lines. To prevent noise they took off their shoes, and unfortunately lost them. Concealing themselves by day, they reached their destination the second night; having had to travel in a circuit, the distance had been about fifty miles. Their flesh was torn and bleeding from the rocks and thorns, and they were haggard with hunger, anxiety, and sleeplessness, but relief was obtained, and General Kearney's command was saved.

He had reached Los Angeles only a few days before the capitulation of Cowenga, and was there when Col. Fremont arrived with his battalion.

At this point a very disagreeable state of things arose, involving many unpleasant personal embarrassments. The government at Washington, being at such a great distance from the scene of operations,—communications having for the most part to pass around Cape

Horn,—and not knowing the state of things at any given time, had to frame instructions to its officers in general terms. It was impossible to be specific, for no one could tell what the state of facts might be when the officer or his despatches should reach the scene. General Kearney would not have been sent out at all, had the government imagined that Fremont and Stockton had already subdued the country. Then, unfortunately, a quick succession of naval commanders passed over the stage—Sloat, Stockton, Shubrick, and Biddle—each liable to interpret his duty variously. Sailors were turned into soldiers, and performed long land marches. The consequence was that differences of judgment arose, and questions of priority and precedence were entertained.

Col. Fremont had not, it is probable, turned his attention much to such questions. His life had been crowded with far different thoughts and interests. The absence of the higher grades in our naval service tended to increase the difficulty. At any rate, in point of fact, he found Commodore Stockton and General Kearney disputing the right to command. It was to him an open question. He had, however, performed his work, and received his appointments, under Stockton.

It may be proper here to quote the view he took of the subject at the time, as frankly given in

a letter to a friend. Although overruled, afterwards, by the judgment of a court-martial, it is evidently a sincere opinion, and however at variance with the artificial code of military etiquette, one which a person of plain common sense might very naturally have entertained.

“When I entered Los Angeles I was ignorant of the relations subsisting between these gentlemen, having received from neither any order or information which might serve as a guide in the circumstances. I therefore, immediately on my arrival, waited upon the governor and commander-in-chief, Commodore Stockton; and, a few minutes afterwards, called upon General Kearney. I soon found them occupying a hostile attitude, and each denying the right of the other to assume the direction of affairs in this country.

“The ground assumed by General Kearney was, that he held in his hand plenary instructions from the President directing him to conquer California, and organize a civil government, and that consequently he would not recognize the acts of Commodore Stockton.

“The latter maintained that his own instructions were to the same effect as Kearney’s; that this officer’s commission was obsolete, and never would have been given could the Government have anticipated that the entire country, seaboard and interior, would have been conquered.

and held by himself. The country had been conquered and a civil government instituted since September last, the constitution of the territory, and appointments under the constitution, had been sent to the government for its approval, and decisive action undoubtedly long since had upon them. General Kearney was instructed to conquer the country, and upon its threshold his command had been nearly cut to pieces, and, but for relief from him (Commodore Stockton) would have been destroyed. More men were lost than in General Taylor's battle of the 8th. In regard to the remaining part of his instructions; how could he organize a government without first proceeding to disorganize the present one? His work had been anticipated; his commission was absolutely void, null, and of no effect.

"But if General Kearney believed that his instructions gave him paramount authority in the country, he made a fatal error on his arrival. He was received with kindness and distinction by the Commodore, and offered by him the command of his land forces. General Kearney rejected the offer and declined interfering with Commodore Stockton. This officer was then preparing for a march to Ciudad de los Angeles, his force being principally sailors and marines, who were all on foot, (fortunately for them,) and who were to be provided with supplies on their

march through an enemy's country where all the people are cavalry. His force was paraded, and ready to start, 700 in number, supported by six pieces of artillery. The command, under Commodore Stockton, had been conferred upon his first lieutenant, Mr. Rowan. At this juncture General Kearney expressed to Commodore Stockton his expectation that the command would have been given to him. The Commodore informed the General that Lieutenant Rowan was in his usual line of duty, as on board ship, relieving him of the detail and drudgery of the camp, while he himself remained the commander-in-chief; that if General Kearney was willing to accept Mr. Rowan's place, under these circumstances, he could have it. The General assented. Commodore Stockton called up his officers and explained the case. Mr. Rowan gave up his post generously and without hesitation; and Commodore Stockton desired them clearly to understand that he remained the commander-in-chief;—under this arrangement the whole force entered Angeles; and on the day of my arrival at that place General Kearney told me that he did then, at that moment, recognize Commodore Stockton as governor of the territory.

“You are aware that I had contracted relations with Commodore Stockton, and I thought it neither right nor politically honorable to



withdraw my support. No reason of interest shall ever compel me to act towards any man in such a way that I should afterwards be ashamed to meet him."

These were the views which led Col. Fremont to take the position which a military tribunal subsequently adjudged to be erroneous. But entertaining them honestly, he acted upon them fearlessly and with decision. The following is his answer to an order received from General Kearney two days after his entrance, with his California battalion, into Los Angeles.

"Ciudad de los Angeles, January, 1847.

"SIR: I have the honor to be in receipt of your favor of last night, in which I am directed to suspend the execution of orders, which, in my capacity of military commandant of this territory, I had received from Commodore Stockton, governor and commander-in-chief in California. I avail myself of an early hour, this morning, to make such a reply as the brief time allowed for reflection will enable me.

"I found Commodore Stockton in possession of the country, exercising the functions of military commandant and civil governor, as early as July of last year; and shortly thereafter I received from him the commission of military commandant, the duties of which I immediately entered upon, and have continued to exercise to the present moment.

"I found also, on my arrival at this place, some three or four days since, Commodore Stockton still exercising the functions of civil and military governor, with the same apparent deference to his rank on the part of all officers, (including yourself,) as he maintained and required, when he assumed in July last.

"I learned also, in conversation with you, that on the march from San Diego, recently, to this place, you entered upon and discharged duties, implying an acknowledgment on your part of supremacy to Commodore Stockton.

"I feel, therefore, with great deference to your professional and personal character, constrained to say that, until you and Commodore Stockton adjust between yourselves the question of rank, where I respectfully think the difficulty belongs, I shall have to report and receive orders, as heretofore, from the Commodore.

"With considerations of high regard,

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"J. C. FREMONT,

"Lieutenant-Colonel U. S. Army, and Military  
Commandant of the Territory of California.

"Brig. Gen. S. W. KEARNEY, U. S. Army."

For this letter, and the line of conduct based upon it, Col. Fremont was brought to a court-martial. The merits of the case will not be discussed here. It rested upon questions of

rank, in reference to which all officers are particularly sensitive, and led to a heated controversy between gallant men. But as Colonel Fremont sent a message to the dying pillow of the principal prosecutor, of forgiveness, Christian sympathy, and good-will, it would ill become these pages to renew the controversy.

Finding himself in this disagreeable position, he endeavored to procure permission to join his regiment in Mexico. He was prepared with sixty picked men, and one hundred and twenty horses, to set out, and would have reached the theatre of the war in time to have participated in its crowning victories,—but he was refused. A like result followed an application to be allowed to collect his exploring party and return over a route not then traversed.

Upon learning that a difficulty had arisen between General Kearney and Col. Fremont, the government at Washington endeavored to avert the unpleasant consequences that might flow from it. Mr. Marcy, Secretary of War, in a despatch to General Kearney, dated June 11, 1847, alludes to the subject, and explains the reasons why instructions given the year before to naval officers had borne the appearance of conferring on them the control of affairs in California. They knew of no force there except the naval. It had not, indeed, entered their dreams that an exploring party could be transformed

into an invincible battalion,—and little did they imagine, when they started General Kearney across the continent, that Fremont and Stockton had already conquered California.

Mr. Marcy informs General Kearney, that the Government is apprised that “Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont bore a conspicuous part in the conquest of California; and that his services have been very valuable in that country.” “Should Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont,” he continues, “*who has the option to return or remain*, adopt the latter alternative, the President does not doubt that you will employ him in such a manner as will render his services most available to the public interest, having reference to his extensive acquaintance with the inhabitants of California, and his knowledge of their language,—qualifications, independently of others, which it is supposed may be very useful in the present and prospective state of our affairs in that country.”

But the advice and suggestions of the secretary availed nothing. Brigadier-General Kearney came home in the course of the season, and Col. Fremont accompanied him, being ordered to follow in his rear; and, upon reaching Missouri, was put under arrest,—a purpose long formed, but not until then made known to him. The court-martial assembled at the Washington Arsenal, in the District of Columbia, at twelve

o'clock, November 2, 1847. The sentence of the court was made up, and the body dissolved, on the 31st of January, 1848. There were three charges. The first was *Mutiny*. The second was *Disobedience to the lawful command of his superior officer*. The third was *Conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline*.

In the opening of his defence, which is an able and manly document, after reciting the charges, he thus states its general ground, and shows the spirit in which he made it:—

“The two superior officers in California, with whom the difficulties began, (Commodore Stockton and General Kearney,) have each had the benefit of stating his own case before this court, showing under what authority they went and acted, what they did, and how they became involved with one another, and how I became involved in their contest.

“An incident and a subordinate in this contest where it originated, and turned up as principal figure in it here for criminal prosecution, I am happy to find that my rights, in one respect, are at least equal to theirs,—that of stating my own case as fully as they stated theirs, and showing how I became principal in a contest which was theirs before I heard of it or came near them. And which, as suggested heretofore, ought to have been settled between themselves, or by the Government, whose com-



missions they both bore. A subordinate in rank, as in the contest, long and secretly marked out for prosecution by the commanding general, assailed in newspaper publications when three thousand miles distant, and standing for more than two months before this court to hear all that could be sworn against my private honor as well as against my official conduct, I come at last to the right to speak for myself.

“In using this privilege, I have to ask of this court to believe that the preservation of a commission is no object of my defence. It came to me, as did those which preceded it, without asking, either by myself or by any friend in my behalf. I endeavored to resign it in California, through General Kearney, in March last, (not knowing of his design to arrest me,) when it was less injurious to me than it is at present. Such as it now is, it would not be worth one moment's defence before this court. But I have a name which was without a blemish before I received that commission; and that name it is my intention to defend.”

The court pronounced him guilty on every specification of each charge. The president of the court, Bt. Brig. General Brooke, Lieut. Col. Hunt, Lieut. Col. Taylor, and Major Baker, filed the following paper, with the record:—

“Under the circumstances in which Lieutenant Colonel Fremont was placed, between two



officers of superior rank, each claiming to command-in-chief in California,—circumstances in their nature calculated to embarrass the mind, and excite the doubts of officers of greater experience than the accused; and, in consideration of the important professional services rendered by him, previous to the occurrence of the acts for which he has been tried, the undersigned, members of the court, respectfully commend Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont to the lenient consideration of the President of the United States.”

Lieutenant-Colonel Long, Lieutenant-Colonel Morgan, and Major Delafield, filed the following paper:—

“Under all the circumstances of this case, and in consideration of the distinguished professional services of the accused, previous to the transactions for which he has now been tried, the undersigned beg leave to recommend him to the clemency of the President of the United States.”

The action of the President, on the case, was as follows:—

“Upon an inspection of the record, I am not satisfied that the facts proved in this case constitute the military crime of ‘mutiny.’ I am of opinion that the second and third charges are sustained by the proof, and that the conviction upon these charges warrants the sentence of the court. The sentence of the court is therefore approved; but, in consideration of the peculiar

circumstances of the case, of the previous meritorious and valuable services of Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont, and of the foregoing recommendations of a majority of the members of the court, the penalty of dismissal from the service is remitted.

“Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont will accordingly be released from arrest, will resume his sword, and report for duty. JAMES K. POLK.”

Upon receiving notice of the result of the trial, Colonel Fremont addressed the following letter to the Adjutant-General:—

“Washington City, C Street, Feb. 19, 1848.

“SIR: I have this moment received the general order, No. 7, (dated the 17th instant,) making known to me the final decision in the proceedings of the general court-martial, before which I have been tried; and hereby send in my resignation of lieutenant-colonel in the army of the United States.

“In doing this, I take the occasion to say that my reason for resigning is that I do not feel conscious of having done anything to merit the finding of the court; and, this being the case, I cannot, by accepting the clemency of the President, admit the justice of the decision against me.

“Very respectfully your obedient servant,

“J. C. FREMONT.”

The judgment of the people of the United States on this trial and its result, was undoubtedly what is expressed in the language used by General Brooke and his three associates. The finding of the court, under the circumstances—a majority of its members doing what they could to ward off the blow, and the President nullifying in fact, while he nominally approved, the sentence—was regarded as reflecting no stigma whatever on Colonel Fremont. But the whole procedure created a sympathy for him in the hearts of the American people, which deepened the admiration his romantic career had excited, and gave him that place in their affections which he holds to this day, and will continue to hold in all coming time.

In his own State, where he was reared to manhood, the feeling in his favor was, naturally, particularly deep. It was the residence of his widowed mother, who had watched his brilliant but perilous career with all the fondness, anxiety, and pride of the maternal heart. When she heard that he was brought home under arrest, and was to be tried on charges that touched his life and honor, she sunk under the blow. He hastened to her, but only to discharge the last office of filial love and sorrow. She died the day before his arrival. The people of Charleston expressed their sense of his character and services in a public and emphatic manner.

“At a meeting, held at the Charleston Hotel, on the evening of the 16th instant, for the purpose of rendering to Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont a proper tribute of respect for his gallantry and good conduct in his late expeditions to Oregon and California, Henry W. Conner, Esq. was called to the chair, and George H. Cameron appointed Secretary.

The Chairman, in a brief and pertinent address, stated that Colonel Fremont, as they all knew, was a native of Charleston, and the city might well be proud of him; for the brilliancy of his achievements, the important results he has accomplished for his country, and the high qualities which he has displayed in every variety of circumstance in which he has been placed, entitle him to rank as amongst the most distinguished men of the times. This sentiment, he believed, was unanimous in the community; and, with a view of giving some public expression of the feeling, it was proposed, some time since, by a number of public-spirited gentlemen, some of them the early friends and associates of Colonel Fremont, to raise, by subscriptions from among our citizens, of one dollar each, a sum of money to be appropriated to the purchase of a sword, or other suitable testimonial, to be presented to Colonel Fremont, as an evidence of the high estimation in which his distinguished services and gallant conduct are held by his fellow-townsmen.

The subscription being some time since full, the object of the present meeting was to carry the design into effect. The following resolutions were then introduced by John E. Carew, Esq., and unanimously adopted.

*Resolved*, That this community highly appreciate the eminent services rendered to his country by their fellow-townsmen, Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont, in his late surveys and exploration of Oregon and California, under circumstances of extreme peril and privation, requiring the exercise of the utmost fortitude and decision of character.

*Resolved*, That we equally appreciate the meritorious services rendered by Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont to the cause of science in general, by his indefatigable zeal and energy, in extending his researches and discoveries in those unknown regions.

*Resolved*, That his friends and associates, in common with the people of Charleston in general, particularly admire and approve the heroic conduct of Colonel Fremont, in repelling an unprovoked and unmanly attack made upon him by Governor Castro with a vastly superior force, and the promptitude and energy with which, with a mere handful of men, he not only defeated, but pursued his enemy, surprising and capturing forts strongly defended with ordnance and men, and eventually taking possession of

the province, and, with the American citizens resident therein, declaring its independence.

*Resolved*, That in testimony of the high estimation in which his gallant conduct and brilliant achievements are held by his friends and fellow-townsmen, a committee be appointed to present to Colonel Fremont, in their behalf, a sword, with appropriate devices and inscriptions, accompanied by suitable expressions of regard and esteem for his person and character.

The following Committee was appointed under the last resolution:—

JOHN E. CAREW,  
HENRY GOURDIN,  
W. C. GATEWOOD.  
W. H. TRESCOTT,  
G. S. BRYAN,  
S. Y. TUPPER.

On motion of John E. Carew, Esq., the Chairman of the meeting was added as Chairman of the Committee.

H. W. CONNER, Chairman.

GEORGE H. CAMERON, Secretary."

The sword presented on this occasion was a rich and splendid specimen of highly wrought and elaborately executed workmanship. It is gold and silver mounted. The head of the hilt, around which is coiled a rattlesnake, belonging to the old arms of the State, is formed to



represent the summit of the Palmetto-tree. On the guard is a map, with the word "Oregon," partly unrolled, to display the coast of the Pacific Ocean. On the scabbard, which is gold, are two silver shields, hung together, with the words "California" and "1846," respectively. Below them is the following inscription:—

### Presented

BY THE CITIZENS OF CHARLESTON  
TO LIEUTENANT-COLONEL  
JOHN CHARLES FREMONT.  
A MEMORIAL OF THEIR HIGH APPRECIATION  
OF THE GALLANTRY AND SCIENCE  
HE HAS DISPLAYED IN HIS  
SERVICES IN OREGON AND CALIFORNIA.

Still lower down on the scabbard is a representation of a buffalo hunt.

An elegant and costly gold-mounted belt, having the present arms of the State on its clasp, presented by the LADIES OF CHARLESTON, accompanied the sword.

On the 1st of February, the day after the conclusion of the court-martial, the military committee of the Senate of the United States, consisting of Messrs. Cass, Benton, Crittenden, Dix, Rusk, and Davis, commenced an investigation, in relation to California claims on the government of the United States. On the 23d of

that month, the chairman, General Cass, presented a Report, of which the Senate ordered 20,000 extra copies to be printed. It contained a great amount of testimony, given under oath, demonstrating the invaluable services rendered by Col. Fremont, in the various stages of the conquest of California, and presenting, in an authentic and unquestionable form, the claims of his heroic battalion, and of all who served under him. On the 5th of June, the Senate ordered "twenty thousand copies of J. C. Fremont's Map of Oregon and California, reduced from the original, according to the projection to be furnished by the said J. C. Fremont," to be lithographed and printed; and on the 15th of June, also ordered the printing of "Fremont's Geographical Memoir (illustrative of his map) of Upper California." This memoir is an able, scientific, and condensed document, written in his felicitous and pictorial style, describing and illustrating the map, and particularly presenting the peculiar natural features—agricultural, botanical, and meteorological—of the "Sierra Nevada," the "Great Basin," the "Maritime region west of the Sierra Nevada," and the "Valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin." In an official letter to the President, dated July 17, 1848, James Buchanan, Secretary of State, in treating of the population of California, speaks of Col. Fremont, "as entitled to the highest considera-

tion, from his well-known ability and superior means of information," in reference to that country and the Pacific regions generally.

These facts sufficiently show that Col. Fremont came out unscathed from the fiery ordeal he had been made to pass. His spirit was not broken—his fame impaired—his zeal reduced—or his devotion to the great purpose of his life abated, one jot or one tittle. Released from official entanglement, and freed from public control, he soon again embarked in his chosen enterprise.

## CHAPTER VII.

### FOURTH EXPEDITION—GREAT SUFFERINGS—MARIPOSA PURCHASE—CONSTITUTION OF CALIFORNIA.

HIS Fourth Expedition was undertaken, mainly, at his own cost and charges. Several public-spirited and liberal individuals, belonging to St. Louis, Missouri, advanced the necessary means, and took the risk of repayment, which was duly made. Among them, Col. Robert Campbell and Thornton Grimsley are particularly to be mentioned. O. D. Filley presented outright a considerable part of the camp equipage. Doctor George Engleman, also of St. Louis, a gentleman of great personal worth and scientific attainments and zeal, devoted himself, on this as on all other occasions, to aid Col. Fremont in his preparations. The Expedition started October 19, 1848.

As no full report of this Expedition has yet been published, it can only be presented in brief. The following letter to Colonel Benton gives an account of the progress and impressions made up to its date.

“Camp at Bent’s Fort, Nov. 17, 1848.

“MY DEAR SIR: We have met with very reasonable success and some good results this first long step upon our journey. In order to avoid the chance of snow-storms upon the more exposed Arkansas road, I followed up the line of the Southern Kansas (the true Kansas River) and so far added something to geography. For a distance of 400 miles our route led through a country affording abundant timber, game, and excellent grass. We find that the Valley of the Kansas affords by far the most eligible approach to the mountains. The whole valley soil is of very superior quality, well timbered, abundant grasses, and the route very direct. This line would afford continuous and good settlements certainly for 400 miles, and is therefore worthy of consideration in any plan of approach to the mountains. We found our friend Major Fitzpatrick in the full exercise of his functions at a point about thirty miles below this, in what is called the ‘Big Timber,’ and surrounded by about 600 lodges of different nations, Apaches, Camanches, Kioways, and Arapahoes. He is a most admirable agent, entirely educated for such a post, and possessing the ability and courage necessary to make his education available. He has succeeded in drawing out from among the Camanches the whole Kioway nation with the exception of six lodges, and brought over among

them a considerable number of lodges of the Apaches and Camanches. When we arrived he was holding a talk with them, making a feast and giving them a few presents. We found them all on their good behavior, and were treated in the most friendly manner; were neither annoyed by them, nor had any thing stolen from us. I hope you will be able to give him some support. He will be able to save lives and money for the government, and knowing how difficult this Indian question may become, I am particular in bringing Fitzpatrick's operations to your notice. In a few years he might have them all farming here on the Arkansas.

“Both Indians and whites here report the snow to be deeper in the mountains than has for a long time been known so early in the season, and they predict a severe winter. This morning for the first time, the mountains showed themselves, covered with snow, as well as the country around us, for it snowed steadily the greater part of yesterday and the night before. Still, I am in nowise discouraged by the prospect, and believe that we shall succeed in forcing our way across. We will ascend the Del Norte to its head, descend on to the Colorado, and so across the Wahsatch mountains and the basin country somewhere near the 37th parallel, reaching the settled parts of California near Monterey. There is, I think, a pass in the Sierra Nevada



between the 37th and 38th, which I wish to examine. The party is in good spirits and good health; we have a small store of provisions for hard times, and our instruments, *barometer* included, all in good order. We are always up an hour or two before light, and the breakfasts are all over, and the camp preparing to move, before sunrise. This breakfasting before daylight, with the thermometer ranging from  $12^{\circ}$  to  $18^{\circ}$ , is a somewhat startling change from the pleasant breakfast-table in your stove-warmed house. I think that I shall never cross the continent again, except at Panama. I do not feel the pleasure that I used to have in these labors, as they remain inseparably connected with painful circumstances, due mostly to them. It needs strong incitements to undergo the hardships and self-denial of this kind of life, and as I find I have these no longer, I will drop into a quiet life. Should we have reasonable success, we shall be in California early in January, say about the 8th, where I shall expect to hear from all by the steamer. Referring you for other details to Jessie, to whom I have written at length, I remain most affectionately yours,

“J. C. FREMONT.”

The people of St. Louis took a deep interest in this expedition, as is evident from the part they

bore in getting it up. A spirited public meeting was held there, on the 21st of February, 1849, at which speeches were made by the Mayor and others, and a series of Resolutions adopted setting forth the importance of a "National Road to the Pacific." There was also a special Resolution passed as follows:—

"Resolved, that the thanks of this meeting be tendered to Colonel J. C. Fremont, for his intrepid perseverance and valuable scientific explorations in the regions of the Rocky and Californian Mountains, by which we have been furnished with a knowledge of the passes and altitudes of those mountains, and are now able to judge of the entire practicability of constructing a railroad over them from St. Louis to San Francisco in California; and that the officers of this meeting be requested to furnish Mrs. Fremont (Colonel Fremont being in California) with a copy of these proceedings."

The copy of the proceedings was communicated with the following letter:—

St. Louis, February 22, 1849.

MRS. FREMONT, MADAM:—

As the officers of a public meeting held in this city, it is made our duty to transmit to you a copy of the proceedings had on that occasion, with which we most cheerfully comply by enclosing herewith a printed copy thereof.

Permit us, Madam, in the performance of this pleasing duty to say that to no one could the compliment intended to be conveyed by the resolution, and so justly merited, be more acceptable than to yourself. A native of St. Louis, the terminus of the magnificent work, the honored lady of the gallant and intrepid explorer of the route, and esteemed daughter of the honored senator, who, for more than thirty years has zealously and perseveringly contended for the trade of the Pacific, China, and the Indies, and now projects a monument to his foresight and wisdom, in putting in motion this grand thoroughfare for nations.

We sincerely congratulate you on the auspiciousness that awaits our City of the West and its benefactors.

With very great respect we are, Madam,  
Your most obedient Servants,

JOHN M. KRUM,  
GEORGE K. MCGUNNEGLE.

It is observed that the meeting at St. Louis were of opinion that Colonel Fremont had, at that date, (February 21,) reached California. They little knew what he had gone through. The disasters of the expedition are best shown in the following letter. It was written in the freedom of domestic affection and private correspondence, but may be presented to the reader

with propriety, and will be appreciated, with deep sensibility, by every feeling heart:—

Taos, New Mexico, January 27, 1849.

MY VERY DEAR WIFE!

I write to you from the house of our good friend Carson. This morning a cup of chocolate was brought to me, while yet in bed. To an overworn, overworked, much fatigued, and starving traveller, these little luxuries of the world offer an interest which in your comfortable home it is not possible for you to conceive. While in the enjoyment of this luxury, then, I pleased myself in imagining how gratified you would be in picturing me here in Kit's care, whom you will fancy constantly occupied and constantly uneasy in endeavoring to make me comfortable. How little could you have dreamed of this while he was enjoying the pleasant hospitality of your father's house! The furthest thing then from your mind was that he would ever repay it to me here.

But I have now the unpleasant task of telling you how I came here. I had much rather write you some rambling letters in unison with the repose in which I feel inclined to indulge, and talk to you about the future with which I am already busily occupied; about my arrangements for getting speedily down into the more pleasant climate of the lower Del Norte and rapidly through into California; and my plans when I

get there. I have an almost invincible repugnance to going back among scenes where I have endured much suffering, and for all the incidents and circumstances of which I feel a strong aversion. But as clear information is absolutely necessary to you, and to your father more particularly still, I will give you the story now instead of waiting to tell it to you in California. But I write in the great hope that you will not receive this letter. When it reaches Washington you may be on your way to California.

Former letters have made you acquainted with our journey so far as Bent's Fort, and from report you will have heard the circumstances of our departure from the Upper Pueblo of the Arkansas. We left that place about the 25th of November, with upwards of a hundred good mules and one hundred and thirty bushels of shelled corn, intended to support our animals across the snow of the high mountains, and down to the lower parts of the Grand River tributaries, where usually the snow forms no obstacle to winter travelling. At the Pueblo, I had engaged as a guide an old trapper well known as "Bill Williams," and who had spent some twenty-five years of his life in trapping various parts of the Rocky Mountains. The error of our journey was committed in engaging this man. He proved never to have in the least known, or entirely to have forgotten, the whole



region of country through which we were to pass. We occupied more than half a month in making the journey of a few days, blundering a tortuous way through deep snow which already began to choke up the passes, for which we were obliged to waste time in searching. About the 11th December we found ourselves at the north of the Del Norte Cañon, where that river issues from the St. John's Mountain, one of the highest, most rugged and impracticable of all the Rocky Mountain ranges, inaccessible to trappers and hunters even in the summer time. Across the point of this elevated range our guide conducted us, and having still great confidence in his knowledge, we pressed onwards with fatal resolution. Even along the river bottoms the snow was already belly deep for the mules, frequently snowing in the valley and almost constantly in the mountains. The cold was extraordinary; at the warmest hours of the day (between one and two) the thermometer (Fahrenheit) standing in the shade of only a tree trunk at zero; the day sunshiny, with a moderate breeze. We pressed up towards the summit, the snow deepening; and in four or five days reached the naked ridges which lie above the timbered country, and which form the dividing grounds between the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Along these naked ridges, it storms nearly all winter, and the winds sweep across



them with remorseless fury. On our first attempt to cross we encountered a *pouderié*, (dry snow driven thick through the air by violent wind, and in which objects are visible only at a short distance,) and were driven back, having some 10 or 12 men variously frozen, face, hands, or feet. The guide came nigh being frozen to death here, and dead mules were already lying about the fires. Meantime, it snowed steadily. The next day we made mauls, and beating a road or trench through the snow crossed the crest in defiance of the *pouderié*, and encamped immediately below in the edge of the timber. The trail showed as if a defeated party had passed by; pack-saddles and packs, scattered articles of clothing, and dead mules strewn along. A continuance of stormy weather paralyzed all movement. We were encamped somewhere about 12,000 feet above the sea. Westward, the country was buried in deep snow. It was impossible to advance and to turn back was equally impracticable. We were overtaken by sudden and inevitable ruin. It so happened that the only places where any grass could be had were the extreme summit of the ridges, where the sweeping winds kept the rocky ground bare and the snow could not lie. Below these, animals could not get about, the snow being deep enough to bury them. Here, therefore, in the full violence of the storms we were obliged to

keep our animals. They could not be moved either way. It was instantly apparent that we should lose every animal.

I determined to recross the mountain more towards the open country, and haul, or pack the baggage (by men) down to the Del Norte. With great labor the baggage was transported across the crest to the head springs of a little stream leading to the main river. A few days were sufficient to destroy our fine band of mules. They generally kept huddled together, and as they froze, one would be seen to tumble down and the snow would cover him; sometimes they would break off and rush down towards the timber until they were stopped by the deep snow, where they were soon hidden by the *pouderié*. The courage of the men failed fast; in fact, I have never seen men so soon discouraged by misfortune as we were on this occasion; but, as you know, the party was not constituted like the former ones. But among those who deserve to be honorably mentioned, and who behaved like what they were,—men of the old exploring party,—were Godey, King, and Taplin; and first of all Godey. In this situation, I determined to send in a party to the Spanish settlements of New Mexico for provisions and mules to transport our baggage to Taos. With economy, and after we should leave the mules, we had not two weeks provis-

ions in the camp. These consisted of a store which I had reserved for a hard day, macaroni and bacon. From among the volunteers I chose King, Brackenridge, Creutzfeldt, and the guide Williams; the party under the command of King. In case of the least delay at the settlements, he was to send me an express. In the mean time, we were to occupy ourselves in removing the baggage and equipage down to the Del Norte, which we reached with our baggage in a few days after their departure (which was the day after Christmas.) Like many a Christmas for years back, mine was spent on the summit of a wintry mountain, my heart filled with gloomy and anxious thoughts, with none of the merry faces and pleasant luxuries that belong to that happy time. You may be sure we contrasted much this with the last at Washington, and speculated much on your doings, and made many warm wishes for your happiness. Could you have looked into Agrippa's glass for a few moments only! You remember the volumes of Blackstone which I took from your father's library when we were overlooking it at our friend Brant's? They made my Christmas amusements. I read them to pass the heavy time and forget what was around me. Certainly you may suppose that my first law lessons will be well remembered. Day after day passed by and no news from our express

party. Snow continued to fall almost incessantly on the mountain. The spirits of the camp grew lower. Proue laid down in the trail and froze to death. In a sunshiny day, and having with him means to make a fire, he threw his blankets down in the trail and laid there till he froze to death. After sixteen days had elapsed from King's departure, I became so uneasy at the delay, that I decided to wait no longer. I was aware that our troops had been engaged in hostilities with the Spanish Utahs and Apaches, who range in the North River valley, and became fearful that they (King's party) had been cut off by these Indians; I could imagine no other accident. Leaving the camp employed with the baggage and in charge of Mr. Vincenthaler, I started down the river with a small party consisting of Godey, (with his young nephew,) Mr. Preuss and Saunders. We carried our arms and provision for two or three days. In the camp the messes had provisions for two or three meals, more or less; and about five pounds of sugar to each man. Failing to meet King, my intention was to make the Red River settlement, about twenty-five miles north of Taos, and send back the speediest relief possible. My instructions to the camp were, that if they did not hear from me within a stated time, they were to follow down the Del Norte.

“On the second day after leaving camp we

came upon a fresh trail of Indians,—two lodges, with a considerable number of animals. This did not lessen our uneasiness for our people. As their trail when we met it turned and went down the river, we followed it. On the fifth day we surprised an Indian on the ice of the river. He proved to be a Utah, son of a Grand River chief we had formerly known, and behaved to us in a friendly manner. We encamped near them at night. By a present of a rifle, my two blankets, and other promised rewards when we should get in, I prevailed upon this Indian to go with us as a guide to the Red River settlement, and take with him four of his horses, principally to carry our little baggage. These were wretchedly poor, and could get along only in a very slow walk. On that day (the sixth) we left the lodges late, and travelled only some six or seven miles. About sunset we discovered a little smoke, in a grove of timber off from the river, and thinking perhaps it might be our express party on its return, we went to see. This was the twenty-second day since they had left us, and the sixth since we had left the camp. We found them,—three of them,—Creutzfeldt, Brackenridge, and Williams,—the most miserable objects I have ever seen. I did not recognize Creutzfeldt's features when Brackenridge brought him up to me and mentioned his name. They had been starving. King had starved to



death a few days before. His remains were some six or eight miles above, near the river. By aid of the horses, we carried these three with us to Red River settlement, which we reached (Jan. 20) on the tenth evening after leaving our camp in the mountains, having travelled through snow and on foot one hundred and sixty miles. I look upon the anxiety which induced me to set out from the camp as an inspiration. Had I remained there waiting the party which had been sent in, every man of us would probably have perished.

The morning after reaching the Red River town, Godey and myself rode on to the Rio Hondo and Taos, in search of animals and supplies, and on the second evening after that on which we had reached Red River, Godey had returned to that place with about thirty animals, provisions, and four Mexicans, with which he set out for the camp on the following morning. On the road he received eight or ten others, which were turned over to him by the orders of Major Beale, the commanding officer of this northern district of New Mexico. I expect that Godey will reach this place with the party on Wednesday evening, the 31st. From Major Beale I received the offer of every aid in his power, and such actual assistance as he was able to render. Some horses which he had just recovered from the Utahs were loaned to me,



and he supplied me from the commissary's department with provisions which I could have had nowhere else. I find myself in the midst of friends. With Carson is living Owens, and Maxwell is, at his father-in-law's, doing a very prosperous business as a merchant and contractor for the troops.

*Evening.* Mr. St. Vrain and Aubrey, who have just arrived from Santa Fé, called to see me. I had the pleasure to learn that Mr. St. Vrain sets out from Santa Fé on the 15th of February, for St. Louis, so that by him I have an early and certain opportunity of sending you my letters. Beale left Santa Fé on his journey to California on the 9th of this month. He probably carried on with him any letters which might have been at Santa Fé for me. I shall probably reach California with him or shortly after him. Say to your father that these are my plans for the future.

At the beginning of February (about Saturday) I shall set out for California, taking the southern route, by the *Rio Abajo*, the Paso del Norte, and the south side of the *Gila*, entering California at the *Agua Caliente*, thence to Los Angeles and immediately north. I shall break up my party here and take with me only a few men. The survey has been uninterrupted up to this point, and I shall carry it on consecutively. As soon as possible after reaching California I will

go on with the survey of the coast and coast country. Your father knows that this is an object of great desire with me, and I trust it is not too much to hope that he may obtain the countenance and aid of the President (whoever he may be) in carrying it on effectually and rapidly to completion. For this I hope earnestly. I shall then be enabled to draw up a map and report on the whole country, agreeably to our previous anticipations. All *my other plans remain entirely unaltered*. I shall take immediate steps to make ourselves a good home in California, and to have a place ready for your reception, which I anticipate for April. My hopes and wishes are more strongly than ever turned that way.

*Monday, 29.* My letter now assumes a journal form. No news yet from the party,—a great deal of falling weather; rain and sleet here, and snow in the mountains. This is to be considered a poor country; mountainous, with severe winters and but little arable land. To the United States it seems to me to offer little other value than the right of way. It is throughout infested with Indians, with whom in the course of the present year the United States will be at war, as well as in the Oregon Territory. To hold this country will occasion the government great expense, and, certainly, one can see no source of profit or advantage in it. An addi-

tional regiment will be required for special service here.

Mr. St. Vrain dined with us to-day. Owens goes to Missouri in April to get married, and thence by water to California. Carson is very anxious to go there with me now, and afterwards remove his family thither, but he cannot decide to break off from Maxwell and family connections.

I am anxiously waiting to hear from my party, in much uncertainty as to their fate. My presence kept them together and quiet, my absence may have had a bad effect. When we overtook King's starving party, Brackenridge said that he "would rather have seen me than his father." He felt himself safe.

Taos, New Mexico, February 6, 1849.

After a long delay, which had wearied me to the point of resolving to set out again myself, tidings have at last reached me from my ill-fated party. Mr. Haler came in last night, having, the night before, reached Red River settlement, with some three or four others. Including Mr. King and Proue, we have lost eleven of our party. Occurrences, after I left them, are briefly these, so far as they are within Haler's knowledge. I say briefly, my dear Jessie, because now I am unwilling to force myself to dwell upon particulars. I wish for a time to

shut out these things from my mind, to leave this country, and all thoughts and all things connected with recent events, which have been so signally disastrous as absolutely to astonish me with a persistence of misfortune, which no precaution has been adequate on my part to avert.

You will remember that I had left the camp with occupation sufficient to employ them for three or four days, after which they were to follow me down the river. Within that time I had expected the relief from King, if it was to come at all.

They remained where I had left them seven days, and then started down the river. Manuel—you will remember Manuel, the Cosumne Indian—gave way to a feeling of despair after they had travelled about two miles, begged Haler to shoot him, and then turned and made his way back to the camp; intending to die there, as he doubtless soon did. They followed our trail down the river,—twenty-two men they were in all. About ten miles below the camp, Wise gave out, threw away his gun and blanket, and a few hundred yards further fell over into the snow and died. Two Indian boys, young men, countrymen of Manuel, were behind. They rolled up Wise in his blanket and buried him in the snow on the river bank. No more died that day,—none the next. Carver raved during

the night, his imagination wholly occupied with images of many things which he fancied himself eating. In the morning, he wandered off from the party, and probably soon died. They did not see him again. Sorel on this day gave out and laid down to die. They built him a fire, and Morin, who was in a dying condition, and snow-blind, remained. These two did not probably last till the next morning. That evening, I think, Hubbard killed a deer. They travelled on, getting here and there a grouse, but probably nothing else, the snow having frightened off the game. Things were desperate, and brought Haler to the determination of breaking up the party, in order to prevent them from living upon each other. He told them "that he had done all he could for them, that they had no other hope remaining than the expected relief, and that their best plan was to scatter and make the best of their way in small parties down the river. That, for his part, if he was to be eaten, he would, at all events, be found travelling when he did die." They accordingly separated. With Mr. Haler continued five others and the two Indian boys. Rohrer now became very despondent; Haler encouraged him by recalling to mind his family, and urged him to hold out a little longer. On this day he fell behind, but promised to overtake them at evening. Haler, Scott, Hubbard, and Martin agreed



that if any one of them should give out, the others were not to wait for him to die, but build a fire for him and push on. At night Kern's mess encamped a few hundred yards from Haler's, with the intention, according to Taplin, to remain where they were until the relief should come, and in the mean time to live upon those who had died, and upon the weaker ones as they should die. With the three Kerns were Cathcart, Andrews, McKie, Stepperfeldt, and Taplin.

Ferguson and Beadle had remained together behind. In the evening Rohrer came up and remained with Kern's mess. Mr. Haler learnt afterwards from that mess that Rohrer and Andrews wandered off the next day and died. They say they saw their bodies. In the morning Haler's party continued on. After a few hours Hubbard gave out. They built him a fire, gathered him some wood, and left him, without, as Haler says, turning their heads to look at him, as they went off. About two miles further, Scott—you remember Scott, who used to shoot birds for you at the frontier—gave out. They did the same for him as for Hubbard, and continued on. In the afternoon the Indian boys went ahead, and before nightfall met Godey with the relief. Haler heard and knew the guns which he fired for him at night, and, starting early in the morning, soon met him. I hear



that they all cried together like children. Haler turned back with Goedy, and went with him to where they had left Scott. He was still alive and was saved. Hubbard was dead,—still warm. From the Kern's mess they learned the death of Andrews and Rohrer, and a little above met Ferguson, who told them that Beadle had died the night before.

Godey continued on with a few new Mexicans and pack mules to bring down the baggage from the camp. Haler, with Martin and Bacon, on foot, and bringing Scott on horseback, have first arrived at the Red River settlement. Provisions, and horses for them to ride, were left with the others, who preferred to rest on the river until Godey came back. At the latest, they should all have reached Red River settlement last night, and ought all to be here this evening. When Godey arrives I shall know from him all the circumstances sufficiently in detail to enable me to understand clearly every thing. But it will not be necessary to tell you any thing further. It has been sufficient pain for you to read what I have already written.

As I told you, I shall break up my party here. I have engaged a Spaniard to furnish mules to take my little party with our baggage, as far down the Del Norte as Albuquerque. Tomorrow a friend sets out to purchase me a few

mules, with which he is to meet me at Albuquerque, and thence I continue the journey on my own animals. My road will take me down the Del Norté, about 160 miles below Albuquerque, and then passes between this river and the heads of the Gila, to a little Mexican town called I think Tusson. Thence to the mouth of the Gila, and across the Colorado, direct to Agua Calienté, into California. I intend to make the journey rapidly, and about the middle of March; hope for the great pleasure of hearing from home. I look for a large supply of newspapers and documents, more perhaps because these things have a home look about them than on their own account. When I think of you all, I feel a warm glow at my heart, which renovates it like a good medicine, and I forget painful feelings in strong hope for the future. We shall yet, dearest wife, enjoy quiet and happiness together—these are nearly one and the same to me now. I make frequently pleasant pictures of the happy home we are to have, and oftenest and among the pleasantest of all I see, our library with its bright fire in the rainy stormy days, and the large windows looking out upon the sea in the bright weather. I have it all planned in my own mind. It is getting late now, La Harpe says that there are two gods which are very dear to us, Hope and Sleep. My homage shall

be equally divided between them; both make the time pass lightly until I see you, and so I go now to pay a willing tribute to the one with my heart full of the other. Good-night.

Socorro, Rio del Norte, February 24, 1849.

MY DEAR SIR: I write a line from this place in the hope that by way of Chihuahua and Vera Cruz, it will reach you sooner than letters by the direct mail from Santa Fé, and so be in advance of exaggerated reports of the events which have delayed my journey, and turned me in this direction. Letters which I have forwarded by Mr. St. Vrain, will inform you that we were overtaken, and surrounded by deep and impracticable snows in the Rocky Mountains at the head of the Del Norté. We lost all our animals and ten men, the mules frozen, and the men starved to death, Proue only excepted. He was frozen. The miscarriage of an express party, sent in under Mr. King, was a secondary cause of our greatest calamity in the loss of our men. In six days after leaving my camp in the mountains, I overtook his party, they having been out twenty-two days, and King having been starved to death. In four days afterwards I reached the settlements, in time to save many, but too late to rescue all the men. Relief was immediately sent back, but did not meet them in time to save

all. An attempt, made with fresh animals, to get our baggage out of the snow, failed entirely, resulting only in the loss of ten or twelve animals more. On the main river bottoms at the foot of the mountains, the snow was five feet deep and in the mountains impassable. Camp furniture of all descriptions, saddles, pack-saddles, &c., clothes, money, &c., all lost. I had the good fortune to recover one of my baggage trunks, which Jessie will remember to have packed for me, and so saved some clothes, &c. My instruments, which I always carry with me, were in greater part saved.

The officers of the army stationed in the country have been uniformly prompt and liberal in their attentions to me, offering me all the assistance in their power. In this country, where supplies are scarce and extravagantly high, this assistance was of great value to me in prosecuting my journey. Among those whom I ought particularly to mention is Major Beale, who is in command of the Northern District, Capt. Judd, Lt. Thomas, Dr. Webb, and Capt. Buford. I mention their names particularly, knowing that you will take pleasure in reciprocating it to them. Colonel Washington desired me to call on him without reserve for any thing at his command. He invited me to dine with him, one out of the two days I spent at Santa Fé, and dined with me at the officers'

quarters on the other. Major Weightman (of Washington, son-in-law of Mr. Cox,) was very friendly in his attentions to me, and Capt. Brent of the Quartermaster's deputy, gave me some most effective aid in my equipment. Among the citizens who have treated me with some attention, I make it a duty to recommend to your attention, when you may meet him, our fellow-citizen of St. Louis, Mr. F. X. Aubry. You will remember him as having lately made an extraordinary ride from Santa Fé, to Independence. We have been travelling together from Santa Fé to this place. Among other acts of kindness, I received from him a loan of \$1000, to purchase animals for my journey to California.

I reached this town at half-past 8 o'clock this morning, by appointment to breakfast. Capt. Buford, who commands here, received me with much kindness, and I am staying with him. This is a military post, and with the exception of a little village or two, a few miles below, the last settlement we see until reaching Tusson, even should we pass by that route. We go on this afternoon, and perhaps reach California in twenty-five days. The weather here is warm, and the people engaged in opening the ground for sowing. I will write a brief note to Jessie, and conclude this, as I shall be much pressed



to get through the business set apart for this day.

“Very affectionately,

“J. C. FREMONT.

“HON. THOMAS H. BENTON, Washington City.”

The allusions, in the foregoing letters, to a plan of life he had formed for the future, indicate that he had designed to spend the residue of his days in retirement; and in California. Before this time he had entrusted \$3,000, to an agent to buy a farm or ranch for him in that country, suggesting a certain tract which he was particularly desirous of obtaining. As that was not available, the agent purchased another, since known as the Mariposa (butterfly) grant. It was thought by most persons, at that time, to have been an undesirable purchase, as it was in the wilderness, far removed from settlements, and infested by Chauchiles Indians, a very savage, warlike, and hostile tribe. The first night Col. Fremont spent on the tract, when he first visited it, six men, belonging to a party that had camped in the neighborhood, were killed by the Indians, and he never went there without having a fight with them. For these reasons it was not a very eligible location for a farm, although comprising considerable land in itself well adapted for agricultural purposes. His plan was to use it as a grazing farm; and



the favorite wish and design of his heart was to collect upon it the faithful and brave companions of his exploration, the men whose friendship and worth had been proved in so many joint perils and sufferings, and there dwell in their midst, surrounded by a colony that would be as one family. With them around him, there would have been nothing to fear from Chauchiles or any other Indians. In the prosecution of this cherished purpose he had purchased, and sent round the cape, a large supply of farming tools and agricultural implements of every kind. But the beautiful vision was dispersed by the discovery of gold, which threw farming projects out of the question altogether.

On the 25th of June, 1849, President Taylor appointed him commissioner for running the boundary line between the United States and the Republic of Mexico. He never entered on the duties of that appointment. In the mean while, under the auspices, and with the encouragement of that truly patriotic and enlightened chief magistrate, the people of California took the usual steps to form a constitution. Col. Fremont exerted his whole influence to secure that portion of the continent to free labor. The great point was gained. And he was elected one of the first senators of the State of California in the congress of the United States.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A SENATOR OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE State of California was admitted into the Union on the 9th of September, 1850. The next day, her senators elect, John C. Fremont and William M. Gwin, after a last desperate effort to prevent it, were allowed to take their seats, the former being introduced to the senate by Mr. Barnwell of South Carolina. Fremont's name had been made familiar to the ears of senators, particularly at that session, by the extent to which California occupied their discussions. In reference to that country, as both conqueror and explorer, he was the authority on which they all relied. In a speech on the compromise bills, delivered in the Senate on the 25th of June, 1850, Mr. Soulé, arguing a certain point relating to California, uses these words: "This opinion is fully sustained by the highest authority which I can summon before the Senate—that of the learned, enterprising, and indefatigable officer, to whose labors the United States and the world are so much indebted."

Such was then the universal estimate throughout the country of the value of the public services of Col. Fremont.

As is the practice of the Senate, in the case of members entering the body as the first representatives of new States, Fremont and Gwin drew lots for the classes to which they were to belong. The term of one third of the senators expires on each alternate 4th March. Col. Fremont drew the shortest term, expiring with the 31st congress on the 4th of March, 1851. Mr. Gwin drew the longest term, continuing to the close of the 33d congress on the 4th of March, 1855. As Fremont was unable to attend the short term of that congress, his whole senatorial service consisted of what remained of the long session, which terminated September 30th—that is, twenty-one days.

In that short time he accomplished an extraordinary amount of work. Immediately, upon taking his seat, indeed, on that very day, he submitted a resolution describing seventeen post routes, covering the whole territory of California, and gave notice of a variety of bills, which provided for the extension over that State of all the functions of the Government, in its several departments. These bills were designed to complete the organization of the whole system of society. They legalized all its interests, pursuits, privileges, and securities, and brought them

within the sphere and under the protection of judicial tribunals. The titles of these bills, which were, in brief, as follows, show the ground they cover :—

1. A bill to provide for the recording of land titles in California.

2. A bill to provide for the survey of the public lands of California.

3. A bill to provide for the erection of land-offices in California.

4. A bill to provide for the settlement of private land claims in California.

5. A bill to grant donations of land to settlers before the session of the country to the United States, and preëmption rights to all subsequent settlers.

6. A bill to regulate the working of mines in California.

7. A bill to extend the laws and judicial system of the United States to the State of California.

8. A bill to refund to said State duties collected at San Francisco and other ports, before the custom-house laws were extended to it.

9. A bill to grant said State public lands for purposes of education.

10. A bill to grant six townships for a university.

11. A bill to grant land to aid in constructing public buildings.

12. A bill to grant land for asylums for the deaf and dumb, for the blind and insane.

13. A bill to relinquish to the city of San Francisco certain public grounds no longer needed for public purposes.

14. A bill to grant to the State of California twelve salt springs, with a section of ground around each.

15. A bill to grant to the city of Monterey the old government house and its grounds.

16. A bill to provide for opening a road across the continent.

17. A bill to grant land for internal improvement.

18. A bill to preserve peace among the Indian tribes, by providing for the extinction of their titles to the gold districts.

Col. Fremont confined himself, while in the Senate, mainly to the discussion of matters relating to California, and in the crowded hurry and complication of business during the last weeks of a summer session, abstained from long speeches. In only one or two instances can his remarks, as they are reported in the Congressional Globe, be considered as approaching that character. He was relied upon to explain and illustrate the circumstances and wants of his own State, and he was ever prompt to do it; but in all cases, in the briefest possible terms. His style of debate was compact, clear, easy,

and natural. He was thoroughly equipped with the requisite information, and presented his views sensibly and forcibly. There is a business aspect about his remarks that distinguishes him as a practical statesman. His three weeks' parliamentary service is very interesting, as an example well worthy of imitation.

What the country needs in the halls of congress is enlightened and practical men, able to speak, but only speaking to the matter in hand. Col. Fremont's course in the Senate presents a fine model of such a parliamentary manner, and is in keeping with the modest but efficient character he has exhibited in his whole public service.

It produced a striking effect at the time in the respectful confidence with which his suggestions were received, and in the success, which, so far as the Senate was concerned, generally crowned his efforts.

Keeping his eye on the main purpose to which he has devoted his life,—that of cementing and consolidating the union and intercourse of the Atlantic and Pacific regions,—on the 12th of September he introduced his bill to provide for the opening of a road across the Sierra Nevada, on the line of the Rio de los Americanos and Carson's River, and the pass at their head, as the commencement of opening a common travelling road between the present western settle-



ments of the United States, the Territory of Utah, and the State of California.

It is worthy of remark that the railroad, now in process of extension from San Francisco towards the mountains, and which is designed to be continued, at last, across the continent, follows the line marked out in Fremont's bill. The result of all subsequent experience and consideration has sanctioned his judgment, thus early formed, that the first thing to be done,—and it ought to be done without further delay,—is to establish a common travelling road from California to the head of steamboat navigation on the Atlantic side. It would gradually lead out population along its line. A series of military posts, and of stopping-places for the relay of horses and change of coaches, would be the points around which settlements would be made and villages rise. Such a post-route would serve important purposes in enabling the government to control its Indian affairs. It would lead to an ultimate determination of the best course for a *Pacific railroad*; and, in the mean time, would soon command a business in the transportation of passengers and specie that would well sustain it. The fevers and other perils of the isthmus, the inconveniences of the voyages, through the Gulf of Mexico, and on the Pacific side, in crowded steamboats, liable to shipwreck and various accidents, would be avoided. The

knotty and threatening diplomatic difficulties connected with Central America, would lose much of their importance. The countless thousands of American travellers to and from the Pacific regions would, along their whole route, be in the bosom and under the protection of their own country. When the Government is compelled, by public opinion, to secure this great convenience to the people, to Fremont will the honor be due, and the thanks given, for having, at the very first, proposed and labored to accomplish it.

On the 14th of September he introduced his bill, making temporary provision "for the working and discovery of gold mines and placers in California, and for preserving order in the gold-mine district;" remarking, at the same time, that the bill was drawn up with a great deal of care and deliberation; that he had looked over the Spanish laws, extending through the space of three hundred years; that he had endeavored to embody in the bill the essence of all that he considered applicable; and had adapted the provisions, as much as possible, to our institutions. In the course of the same day he explained and advocated the bill in extended remarks, citing the legislation, and illustrating, by historical records, the policy of Spain towards Indians in her American colonies, from 1533 to the period of their independence.

On the 20th September, he advocated the establishment of liberal judicial salaries in California, combating the opinion of those senators who had expressed their belief that the high prices ruling there were temporary, and would soon come down to the level of the Atlantic States. He predicted that the gold would be found inexhaustible, and gave his reasons at length for this conviction, in a detail of calculations which have been remarkably confirmed by subsequent experience.

Among the bills introduced into the Senate by Col. Fremont, was one, it will be perceived, to ascertain and settle private land claims in the State of California. When that bill came up, he presented its merits in these few words: "The bill conforms to the decisions of the supreme court and to the usual form, with but two exceptions. The first is the provision which makes a decision in favor of the claimant by the commissioners, in the first place, final against the United States. The other provision makes a decision in the district court, in favor of the claimant, also final against the United States. These provisions were introduced for two reasons; first, to quiet the country, and to contribute to its general prosperity; but a further reason is, that a decision of their own law officers, their own judges, the arbitrators of the United States, ought to be final against the United States.

The people ought not to be kept waiting upon the law, for years perhaps, for an adjudication. I state these reasons, and leave the bill to the Senate, to stand upon its own merits."

The bill failed, in the hurry of the closing session, to become a law. The experience of California has amply justified the views which Colonel Fremont so compactly and clearly expressed. A country acquired by conquest, with land titles resting upon principles and practices of foreign law, whose people were unacquainted with our usages, and many of them with our language, situated on the opposite side of the globe, ought to have had justice and right carried to them at once. Provision ought to have been made to settle, adjust, and determine all questions of claim and title without unnecessary delay. Humble and feeble private parties ought not to have been exposed to a protracted and exhausting contest with a powerful government before its remote ultimate tribunals. Fremont's few words condense the decisions of common sense.

It seems that some political opponent, in the recklessness of party prejudice, and to prevent his reelection to the Senate, threw out an intimation that Col. Fremont had introduced this bill, with a view to his own personal interest as the purchaser of the Mariposa tract. At the next session of the Senate, Col. Fremont not

being able to attend, had the bill altered so as to except his title from its operation, as appears by the following extract from a speech of Col. Benton, delivered Jan. 3, 1851. After saying that, in framing his bill, "Col. Fremont felt that it would look ostentatious and uncalled for, to volunteer an exception against himself," Col. Benton proceeded as follows: "But, now, and after what has happened, he no longer feels any hesitation on that account; and, in conformity to his feelings, I now make an exception which will take his case out of the general provisions of the bill, and subject it to run the gauntlet of all the courts from the lowest to the highest, and from the shores of the Pacific Ocean to the shores of the Atlantic, and against all the counsel which the substitute bill authorizes to be employed. He is willing to run the gauntlet of all this, according to his letter in relation to the Mariposa estate, which was read yesterday; but he is not willing that other claimants should be so subjected, or that his exertions in their behalf should be weakened by the supposition of an interested motive."

In answer to an inquiry on the subject of his Indian bill, Mr. Fremont said:—

"The general policy of Spain, in her Indian relations, was the same as that which was afterwards adopted by all Europe, and recognized by the United States. The Indian right of occupa-



tion was respected, but the ultimate dominion remained in the Crown. Wherever the policy of Spain differed from that of the other European nations, it was always in favor of the Indians. Grants of lands were always made subject to their rights of occupancy, reserving to them the right to resume it even in cases where it had been abandoned at the time of the grant. But the Indian right to the lands in property, under the Spanish laws, consisted, not merely in possession, but extended even to that of alienation; a right recognized and affirmed in the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States. A claim to lands in East Florida, under a title derived from grants by the Creek and Seminole Indians, and ratified by the local authorities of Spain before the cession of Florida to the United States was confirmed.

"I have here in my hand a volume of Spanish laws published in the city of Mexico in 1849, and purporting to contain all the legislation on this subject which was in force in Mexico up to that date. These laws extend from 1533, some twelve years after the conquest of Mexico by Cortez, to 1817. The policy of Spain in regard to the Indians, differed somewhat from that of the United States, and particularly in this: that, instead of removing the Indians from amidst the Spanish population, it kept them there, and protected them in the possession of their lands



among their civilized neighbors, having always in view the leading object of converting them to the Christian religion. To this end the power of the government was always directed; it was a national object, and, in great part, was a governing principle in the laws of which they were the subject. I will not occupy the time of the Senate by reading at length the several laws, but will merely make a few statements of such particular parts as bear directly upon the rights in question.

“A royal order of Charles V., a supreme law in Spain, of the year 1533, decreed that the woods, pasture lands, and water contained in any grants of signiories, which had been or should be made in the Indies, should be common to Spaniards and Indians. Another royal order of 1687 (confirming and extending an ordinance of the viceroy, Count Saint Stephen, of the year 1567,) commanded that in all the villages of Indians throughout all New Spain, who needed land to live upon and sow, there should be given to them a space of 500 yards, and as much more as they had any need of for cultivation around their village, measuring from the furthest outside house, and if the village happened to be a large one, an unlimited quantity should be allowed, and that thereafter no grant of pasture ground or lands should be given to any one within

eleven hundred yards of the most outside house of the population.

“A law of Philip III. of 1618, ordained that no pasture grounds of black cattle should be situated within a league and a half of any village converted in old times to the Christian religion, and not within three leagues of any village of newly converted Indians, upon pain of forfeiting the pasture ground and half the cattle which there should be upon it; and the Indians had the right to kill any cattle which should be so found trespassing upon their lands, and were subject to no penalty whatsoever from them.

“A decree of Philip II. of 1571, commanded that the Indians should have the right to alienate their landed property as well as their personal effects, prescribing only that proclamation should be made during a specified time, and at a place of public sale.

“In California we have both classes of Indians—the Christian or converted Indians, collected together at the missions and in large villages of the sea coast and the interior, and the wild Indians of the mountains, who never were reduced to subjection.

“In California we are at this moment invading these rights. We hold there by the strong hand alone. The Indians dispute our right to be there, and they extend the privilege which the

law secured them of killing the cattle to that of killing the owner whenever they find an occasion. Our occupation is in conflict with theirs, and it is to render this occupation legal and equitable, and to preserve the peace, that I have introduced this bill. It recommends itself to the favorable consideration of the Senate by its obvious necessity, and because it is right in itself, because it is politic, and because it is conformable to the established custom of this Government."

The great service Col. Fremont rendered to his constituents and the country, while in the Senate of the United States, was in securing to the miner the entire product of his labor, and preventing a tax being levied upon the precious metals. When his bill to this effect came up for discussion on the 24th of September, a strenuous effort was made to amend it by substituting a provision that all gold extracted from the mines or placers of California, should be and remain the property of the United States, and delivered over accordingly, the miner to receive it back at a certain rate, which would leave a percentage in the hands of Government. The Senate, convinced by the statements of the California Senator, rejected this amendment. As further amendments continued to be urged, which would have essentially changed the policy of his bill, Col. Fremont at last felt constrained, on the

25th of September, to enter, at greater length than was his custom, upon the defence of his views. He introduced his remarks as follows:—

“The very advanced period of the session when we obtained our seats, and were able to bring forward the California business, induced me to take a course in relation to our bills which I thought most agreeable to the Senate and best suited to secure for them a favorable consideration. This was not to use the indulgence of the Senate for making speeches, but to confine myself to a brief exposition of the nature and principles of a bill when it should be called up, and then to answer, as well as I could, the inquiries and objections of senators either to principles or details. But I find such a course difficult on this bill, which introduces a new subject, and one which, from its novelty and importance, excites, and ought to excite, much interest, and requires close examination. The principles of this bill, as I have already stated them, are, to exclude all idea of making a national revenue out of these mines, to prevent the possibility of monopolies by moneyed capitalists, and to give to NATURAL CAPITAL, that is to say, to LABOR and INDUSTRY, a fair chance to work, and the secure enjoyment of what they find. To carry out these principles to their just results, all the details of the bill are carefully directed.”

After some remarks pointing out the evils that would flow from the adoption of a different system, urged by some senators, he proceeded to explain that provided for in his bill, as follows:—

“The quantity allowed to each person is ample, considering the privilege he has of changing his location as often as he pleases, and selling his lot when he is offered a good price. Thirty feet square is to be the size of a lot, to be worked by manual labor, in a placer; two hundred and ten feet, or about one acre, is to be the size of a lot in a mine, to be worked by machinery, in the rock.

“A placer lot, accordingly, contains nine hundred superficial feet, with a depth to the centre of the earth. A cube of these dimensions would be twenty-seven thousand solid feet; and if a place of tolerable richness is found, an industrious man may say his fortune is made. Sooner or later every industrious man may expect to find a good lot; and whether he sells it or works it, his reward will be ample.

“If he sells, he may take another permit, and work on until he makes another good discovery, and either sells this or exhausts it; and so on, until he is satisfied, or the mining exhausted. Wherever he may plant his stake, exclusive possession is guaranteed to the miner, so long as he works his mining lot, or to his assignee, if sold,



or to his legal representatives, in the event of his death. All that he finds is to be his own—there is no tax to be paid; no per centum—no fifth, or tenth, or twentieth to the government; no officer to stand over the miner and require him to give an account of all he finds, and surrender up a part to the Federal government,—all is his own that he has the industry to collect; and for these multiplied advantages, with the protection of law and the security of order, the citizen pays only one dollar a month for as many months as he may choose, not exceeding twelve, with a preëemptive right to continue his own lot. This nominal sum of one dollar a month is all that the bill proposes for him to pay; and while it will be sufficient to indemnify the government for all expenses, and to yield a respectable sum besides, it will be no burden on the miner; he will not feel it, but will pay it cheerfully in return for the advantages which the permit secures him.

“I am glad to find that the Senate evinces no disposition to create revenue by heavy taxes on the gold mines of our State, and that the liberal principles of this bill, from the votes already taken, are likely to prevail in this Chamber.

“I think that this Government should look for increase of revenues to the EXPANDED COMMERCE which the discovery of these gold mines has created in the Pacific Ocean.



“ Oppressive taxes on the precious metals are well suited to a government like that of Spain, which derived one of its chief supports from its mines in New Spain; which used the labor of the people only to create revenue; which demanded from them the first fruits of the earth, and taxed every thing which it did not monopolize, and every thing in the same proportion—agricultural products as well as mines—a tenth of the whole, and all to support the extravagant expenditures of its arbitrary monarchs. In consequence of these oppressive exactions, ninety-nine were ruined out of a hundred who engaged in gold-mining operations in her dependencies. But we have adopted a wiser course. Reason and experience teach us the folly as well as the injustice of attempting such exactions from the people. We have seen their failure on a small scale in our own lead-mine leasing, and we have before us the result of their operation under the elaborate system and arbitrary power of Spain, which, with all their extravagant taxes, yielded, in those years of which I have any account, and at a flourishing period of the mines, a revenue of only about \$60,000 per annum from the gold mines of New Spain. Mexico found out the folly of this course, and, immediately after her independence in 1831, abolished these multiplied taxes, and substituted for them all a simple duty of three per cent. Heavy taxes had

almost destroyed this branch of her revenues, and liberal provisions were made to resuscitate it. The quicksilver mines were given to all who would work them, free of all tax and all kind of duty. Rewards of \$25,000 each were decreed to the first four operators who should extract a certain quantity of the metal—the miners were exempted from all personal contributions and all military service—and all to restore what taxation had ruined. We cannot, certainly, go back from what Mexico has done, and take up the abandoned system of old Spain; and I trust that, while we repudiate taxation, we shall also avoid anarchy and disorder, and give to the country some such brief and simple code of regulations, as will secure to every man the peaceable exercise of his industry, and the possession and enjoyment of what he gains.”

It seems to be quite obvious, that great evils would have resulted from exacting a percentage from the miners upon the gold obtained by them. It would have led to hiding or otherwise concealing the gold, to false representations of the amount, and to endless controversies and altercations between miners and official agents. The fatal poison of such a system is in the alienation which contrary interests would inevitably have engendered between the people and the Government. This will sap any political organization at its foundation. Nothing

can save a state from decay and ruin, where the people and the government are led to regard each other as enemies. This would have been the effect had government officers watched the labor of the miner, and snatched away the product of his toil, in the form of a direct tax; and the gold of California would have done no more for the benefit of the people, the government, or the world, than the precious metals in Mexico and Peru did under the rule of Spain.

The public records show that it is mainly by the exertions of Fremont that the Senate of the United States was persuaded to avoid the policy of taxing the gold of California. It is free to all who toil for it. There is no inducement and no room left for fraud or concealment. Industry possesses and enjoys its full reward. Labor is protected from exaction, clothed with its proper dignity, and crowned with prosperity. The people feel the government only in its munificence and guardian care. Every motive that can prompt to enterprise, and every spring that can develop energy is brought to bear; and we may repose in a just confidence that the mineral treasures of the Pacific coast will contribute, with a mighty power, to fulfil the great design of all Fremont's labors,—in transferring to channels, to be opened across our continent, the commerce of the world.

## CHAPTER IX.

ENGAGES IN THE CATTLE BUSINESS IN CALIFORNIA  
—GOLD DISCOVERY—VISIT TO ENGLAND AND  
FRANCE—IMPRISONMENT IN LONDON—FIFTH  
EXPEDITION—PACIFIC RAILROAD—MARIPOSA TI-  
TLE FINALLY CONFIRMED BY THE SUPREME  
COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

IN returning to California by the isthmus, after the close of the session of Congress, in the fall of 1850, he suffered from Panama fever, which left him for a long time quite paralyzed by a neuralgic affection of the left side. He was utterly unable, from this cause, to return to Washington to serve out the residue of his term. He was a candidate for reelection to the United States Senate, and was supported by the Free State party. Governor Charles Robinson was a member of the California legislature, at the time, and their joint struggles to save that State from slavery were, as they both have declared, the foundation of the friendship that exists between them, and have given additional force to the ardent

sympathy which Col. Fremont has expressed, from the first, in such decisive language and on all occasions, in the devotion of Robinson, and his heroic fellow-sufferers, to the same sacred cause in Kansas. There were more than 140 ballots. Every native Californian voted for him from the beginning to the end. There was no election; and the whole subject was postponed to the next legislature.

When his health was sufficiently restored, he went into the cattle-raising business. By an act of Congress, passed September 30, 1850, the President was authorized to appoint "commissioners to hold treaties with the various Indian tribes in the State of California." Three were appointed. Upon reaching California, they discovered that the main cause of all the Indian troubles there, was, that the poor creatures were in a state of actual starvation. The rush of gold diggers into the San Joaquin valley, had driven the Indians into the mountains, where there were no means of subsistence. What the Indians needed was food. The commissioners, therefore, made treaties with twenty-one tribes, stipulating the surrender by them of the gold-bearing regions, and their removal to lands of less mineral value, but equally well adapted to their uses, and agreeing to provide them with a sufficient allowance of beef to cover the period of their transfer, and sustain them until able to take



care of themselves in their new location—that is, during the remainder of the year 1851 and the year 1852. Colonel George W. Barbour, of Kentucky, one of the commissioners, and acting by their authority, contracted with Col. Fremont to supply the requisite amount of beef. In a letter to him, Barbour says: “I have had many proposals offered me to furnish such supplies; but regarding your offer as the lowest and best of any yet made by a responsible man, and believing, as I do, that your offer is a fair one, I have concluded to close with your proposition.”

As Col. Fremont was then engaged in the cattle-raising business, and was well known to all the people of the country, and in the enjoyment of universal confidence and good-will, he was enabled to execute such a contract. He collected a vast number of cattle in the Southern part of the State, hired drivers, and himself accompanied and superintended the drove. It was the dry season. The cattle were driven upwards of 300 miles, in the heat of summer, at great labor and expense. About 400 head died on the route. He delivered 1,225,500 pounds of beef on the hoof, and accepted in payment drafts drawn by the commissioner on the Secretary of the Interior. This supply of food, which he collected with his usual energy and business capacity, and delivered on the faith of the Government, was declared by the entire delegation in



Congress from California, in 1854, to have removed the cause of the Indian wars, to have given the country peace, and to have opened it to the secure labors of the miners.

But the Senate rejected the treaty. Col. Fremont's drafts against the Secretary of the Interior were not allowed, and he had no remedy but by a special act of Congress. For more than three years he was kept out of his money. The thirty-third Congress at last discharged this just debt. A bill passed both Houses unanimously, paying him the principal, and a reasonable rate of interest, the whole amounting to about \$240,000.

The Mariposa purchase, which was regarded as a hard bargain at the time, became a very different affair when the gold discovery was made. It is exceedingly rich in the metal, both as mixed with the soil, and in the quartz rock, as rich, perhaps, as any part of that country. Immediately upon this fact becoming known, the title by which Col. Fremont holds it was brought in question by private parties, and then by the Government. This led him to new struggles and contests, and has carried him through a series of experiences that have tested his firmness as much, perhaps, as any of the trials of his life. But, as in every thing else, he has conquered success at last.

An agent had been employed in England,

who had executed several leases to various parties. Finding that the title was disputed, and that the litigation might be protracted, he came back to the Atlantic States in the spring of 1852, and went over to England, accompanied by his family, to prevent all further proceedings by his agent, and remove any difficulties or embarrassments that might arise from transactions based upon the supposition of the certain validity of the title. He finally succeeded in arranging the business to the satisfaction of all concerned.

In England, as afterwards on the continent, he received attentions which showed the extent to which his geographical discoveries and scientific reports had given him a European reputation. His brilliant and chivalrous proceedings in California had, no doubt, also attracted much observation. Learned and scientific societies invited him to attend their meetings. Many distinguished persons, of eminent attainments and high position, sought his acquaintance.

While in charge of California affairs, by appointment as military governor of that territory from Commodore Stockton, in the spring of 1847, he had drawn upon the Secretary of State of the United States, Mr. Buchanan, to carry on the government, and obtain supplies for the troops under his command. These drafts were not honored at Washington, as no appropria-

tions had been made by Congress to meet them. They had remained unpaid, and had passed, perhaps, from hand to hand.

When Col. Fremont had been a few weeks in London, without having received any notice whatever, he was arrested, at the instance of the holders of some of these drafts, by a Solicitor's clerk, accompanied by four constables, in front of the Clarendon Hotel, while handing his wife into a carriage, on their way to dine with Mr. Sturgis. It was past banking hours. He inquired for what he was arrested. They told him, for £10,000. Upon his saying that there must be some mistake, they replied, in a very rough way, that he would soon find that there was no mistake. They hurried him off to a place of confinement, commonly known as a "sponging-house," from the extortion practised upon persons arrested for debt, who may be supposed to have means. Mrs. Fremont instantly sent a message to Mr. Sturgis, explaining the cause of their absence, and drove herself to the residence of Mr. Lawrence, the American Minister in London, to inform him of the affair. Mr. Lawrence was not at home. He had gone, with Mr. Bates and others, to Mr. Sturgis's to meet Col. and Mrs. Fremont. Not knowing upon whom else to call for advice or aid, she had to return to her hotel. Mr. Bancroft Davis, then Secretary of Legation, also of

Mr. Sturgis's party, upon receiving information of the transaction, went, late in the evening, with others, to Col. Fremont, in the place of his confinement. The next day, it not being proper for Mr. Lawrence, on account of his official position to do it, Mr. George Peabody gave the necessary bail, and Col. Fremont was released. This was one of the rewards he received for having saved California to his country! To be publicly thrown into a British prison, and subjected to ignominy and outrage in the streets of London! What rendered the occurrence particularly annoying, was the fact that the Colonel and Mrs. Fremont had just before been honored by the Queen, with a reception at a Drawing Room, of which the usual announcement had been made in the public Gazettes.

Not long after this, Col. Fremont went to Paris, where he took a house, in which he continued about a year. In June, 1853, he returned to his own country.

In August, 1853, he started upon his fifth and last expedition, being determined to solve the problem of the practicability of a trans-continental communication, by common road, and by railroad. This expedition was at the joint expense of Col. Fremont and Col. Benton.

The particular point to which attention was to be directed, was, to ascertain the winter condition of the country, in reference to the

practicability of a railroad, to determine how far snow would be an obstruction, and whether the circumstances incident to that season could be encountered and surmounted.

So great a length of time elapsed before hearing from him, that the most serious apprehensions began to prevail; and as weeks and months wore away and no intelligence came from any quarter, a painful conviction deepened in the public mind that he had met, at last, the fate he had so often braved. It was not until the early part of April, 1854, that his safety was ascertained. Col. Babbitt, the Secretary of Utah Territory, was on his way to Washington, with the United States mail. He had left the Great Salt Lake on the 4th of February, and was going by what is called the coast route, that is, taking passage on the Pacific side, and crossing by Panama. On the 8th of February, an Indian came to his camp and told him that, the day before, he had met a company of Americans, and "that they were hungry." That night Babbitt overtook Fremont at a small Mormon settlement. He sent a man to his camp to communicate with him, but Fremont excused himself from talking as he was too much worn out; but the next morning early, he called upon Babbitt and informed him of the route and condition of his party. Col. Babbitt published an account of the meeting in the California papers,

and they brought the first intelligence received from the expedition. About the same time the Philadelphia Bulletin contained an extract from a letter of Mr. S. N. Carvallo, Col. Fremont's daguerreotypist, dated Feb. 8, and brought in, undoubtedly, by Col. Babbitt, in which he says that the party had "lived fifty days on horse-flesh, and for the last forty-eight hours had been without food of any kind." The National Intelligencer, of April 12, 1854, finally quieted the public apprehensions, by the following article:—

"It gives us great pleasure to insert the subjoined letter from Colonel Fremont, not only because it contradicts the exaggerated reports of deaths sustained by his party and assures us of the intrepid explorer's own safety, after his two months' bold journey through the mountain wilds in midwinter, but because his success seems fully to have established the favorable nature of the central route for a railroad in winter as well as summer:—

<sup>1</sup> "PARAWAN, IRON COUNTY, UTAH TERRITORY,

"February 9, 1854.

"MY DEAR SIR: I have had the good fortune to meet here our friend Mr. Babbitt; the Sec-

<sup>1</sup> Valley of the *Parawan*, about sixty miles east of the meadows of Santa Clara, between 37 and 38 degrees of north latitude, and between 113 and 114 degrees of west longitude; elevation above the sea about 5,000 feet.



retary of the Territory, who is on his way to Washington, in charge of the mail and other very interesting despatches, the importance of which is urging him forward with extreme rapidity. He passes directly on this morning, and I have barely a few moments to give you intelligence of our safe arrival and of our general good health and reasonable success in the object of our expedition.

“This winter has happened to be one of extreme and unusual cold. Here, the citizens inform me, it has been altogether the severest since the settlement of this valley ; consequently, so far as the snows are concerned, the main condition of our exploration has been fulfilled. We entered the mountain regions on the Huerfano River on the 3d of December, and issued from it here on the 7th of this month, arriving here yesterday afternoon. We went through the Coochatope Pass on the 14th December, with four inches,—not feet, take notice, but inches—of snow on the level, among the pines and in the shade on the summit of the Pass. This decides what you consider the great question, and fulfils the leading condition of my explorations ; and therefore I go no further into details in this letter.

“I congratulate you on this verification of your judgment, and the good prospect it holds out of final success in carrying the road by this

central line. Nature has been bountiful to this region in accumulating here, within a few miles of where I am writing, vast deposits of iron and coal and timber, all of the most excellent quality; and a great and powerful interior State will spring up immediately in the steps of the Congressional action which should decide to carry the road through this region. In making my expedition to this point, I save nearly a parallel of latitude, shortening the usual distance from Green River to this point by over a hundred miles. In crossing to the Sierra Nevada, I shall go direct by an unexplored route, aiming to strike directly the Tejon Passes, at the head of the San Joaquin valley, through which, in 1850, I drove from two to three thousand head of cattle that I delivered to the Indian Commissioners. I shall make what speed I possibly can, going light, and abandoning the more elaborated survey of my previous line, to gain speed.

“ Until within about a hundred miles of this place, we had daguerreotyped the country over which we passed, but were forced to abandon all our heavy baggage to save the men, and I shall not stop to send back for it. The Delawares all came in sound, but the whites of my party were all exhausted and broken up, and more or less frost-bitten. I lost one, Mr. Fuller, of St. Louis, Missouri, who died on entering this valley. He died like a man, on horseback, in

his saddle, and will be buried like a soldier, on the spot where he fell.

“I hope soon to see you in Washington. Mr. Babbitt expects to see you before the end of March. Among other documents which he carries with him, are *the Maps and Report of Captain Gunnison's party*.

“Sincerely and affectionately,

“JOHN C. FREMONT.

“Col. BENTON, Washington.

“P. S. This is the Little Salt Lake settlement, and was commenced three years since. Population now four hundred, and one death by sickness since the settlement was made. We have been most hospitably received. Mr. Babbitt has been particularly kind, and has rendered me very valuable assistance.”

The St. Louis Democrat of April 8, 1854, speaking of this last expedition, after mentioning that it was undertaken, as well as the previous one, at his own expense, says that when he set out upon it, “his health was in a precarious condition, and he was even compelled to take with him a physician, who accompanied him to the Rocky Mountains. His private business in California called loudly for his presence there, having suffered by his absence in Europe, protracted by imprisonment for debts incurred in the conquest of California, and which was adding millions every year to the wealth of

our people, whilst our government neglected and refused to pay the debt incurred by Fremont in its acquisition. It was under such difficulties and embarrassments, in the face of so much personal sacrifice and danger, that this expedition was undertaken by the heroic and intrepid adventurer."

On Colonel Fremont's return to the Atlantic States, the St. Louis Intelligencer welcomed him in the following language:—

"The maxim that fortune favors the brave, has been signally illustrated by the fact that the winter which Col. Fremont chose for exploring a howling wilderness of thousands of miles, where he was cut off for weeks from the succor and sympathy of civilized man, except his own party, has been the hardest winter ever known in those regions. To carry his men safely through the fearful hardships and perils of this unexampled winter, is itself a solution of the problem which he went to determine, besides showing fortitude, mental resources, and unconquerable energy of will, which stamp the hardy explorer as one of the great men of action who make their mark upon their country and their age. It is the fit crowning achievement of a series of adventurous explorations, not surpassed, if equalled, in respect to the qualities displayed and the magnitude of the results, by any similar career in the history of mankind.

The career of Fremont has been characteristically western and American, at a time when the great work of western America is to subdue the wilderness. He is a mightier Daniel Boone, on a far more magnificent theatre, and adds to the sturdy qualities of the pioneer of civilization, those graces and attainments of science and literature, which only the highest civilization can confer."

In the National Intelligencer, of June 13, 1854, Col. Fremont published a letter condensing the general results of his last exploration, which the House of Representatives ordered to be reprinted among its miscellaneous documents. When his full report is published, it will contain a rigid and thorough discussion of all the obstacles and difficulties in the way of the construction of a railroad connecting the Atlantic States, centrally, with the Pacific coast. It is well known that he is fully convinced that it can be done. When the people say that it shall be done, it will be done. The resources of this great country are adequate to the work. Its commerce, its union, and its power, require it. All that is needed is a government pledged to accomplish it, and honest, firm, and energetic enough to redeem its pledge.

After a resistance on the part of the United States quite unparalleled, and continued to a point of persistency which brought down a



rebuke from the bench, the supreme court, during its last session, fully and finally established Col. Fremont's title to the Mariposa grant, and his patent was made out and delivered to him by the President himself.

It is a property of very great value. To meet the various expenses incident to a harassing and tedious litigation, it was necessary to convey one half of it to another party: It contains seventy square miles, and includes already a population rising 10,000. The town of Mariposa is a county seat, having a court-house that cost \$12,000. There are six or eight other towns or villages, within its limits, and its value is rapidly increasing. While the title hung in doubt, its prosperity was kept in check. But now every thing can be placed on a firm basis. The Mariposa Gazette, the local newspaper, in a recent article, expresses the gratification of the people of the territory, that it has been secured to Col. Fremont. His countrymen of all parties, we may rest assured, participate warmly in the same satisfaction.

Although the meridian of life is scarcely yet reached, its great struggles seem to be over, and he may well enjoy the felicity, which a retrospect of usefulness and honor, and the blessings of a bountiful Providence, cannot fail to bestow.



## CHAPTER X.

### GENERAL REMARKS.

THE career of Col. Fremont must be considered as one of the most active, and crowded with service, of any in the whole circle of biography. Considering that we live in what is called a utilitarian age, and that his line of occupation has itself been eminently practical, it is remarkable how much that is romantic and almost marvellous is spread over it. Poetry has seldom indulged in visions stranger or more exciting than has been his reality. Chivalry has seldom had finer models than his camp presented. The artist finds as many scenes of varied and most attractive interest, in the events and circumstances delineated on the foregoing pages, as in the experience of any feudal or heroic period of the world. The days of high adventure are not over; life, in our times, and in our country, opens still a field for true heroism; and, in every calling, presents emergencies

that will try and display the power and glory of courage, truth, benevolence, and fidelity.

Of a character not yet closed, no minute or full portrait can be drawn. But his countrymen justly ask to be made acquainted, in some detail of particulars, with the person of one who has attracted so much their attention; and a few general reflections may, with propriety, be appended to the narrative now brought to a close.

Colonel Fremont is not yet old in years, and looks even younger than he is. He is in the full flower of matured strength and health. He is about five feet nine inches in height, but from his perfectly straight, erect, and elastic bearing, appears taller than his inches. He is quite slender, but well made, of a peculiarly graceful bearing, quick and alert in his movements; and by his manners and expression, conciliates the good-will of all whom he meets. His success in life is partly owing to the favorable impression he makes by his manner of treating others in common intercourse. Consul Larkin, in a letter to the Secretary of State, dated April 2, 1846, referring to Fremont's first visit to Monterey, says that he "was well received in this place, and to the last day we heard of him, by the natives individually, who sold him provisions and liked his presence." Colonel William H. Russell, a witness of the

highest character, and great means of information, testified before the military committee of the Senate as follows: "In consequence of the wise and humane treatment of Colonel Fremont towards the conquered population, his popularity became very great in the country, and enabled him to do what no other man, I confidently believe, could have done." There is much more testimony to the same effect. The point is urged as an important lesson. Nothing costs less, and nothing purchases so much as a kind, respectful, courteous, and agreeable treatment of others.

This uniform justice and friendliness of manner and spirit in his treatment of others, combined with readiness to decide where the decision belongs to him; rapid, and as the result has always proved, correct judgment; cool and intrepid courage, and persevering firmness of purpose, constitute that great executive capacity he has invariably exhibited, by which perfect order and constant harmony were preserved among his men, and his force rendered efficient, invincible, and successful against all odds. This executive capacity enabled him to surmount all obstacles in his exploring expeditions, and was signally shown in the conquest and government of California. It enabled him, in concluding his spirited defence before the court-martial, to say, in the bold confidence of truth:—

“My acts in California have all been with high motives, and a desire for the public service. My scientific labors did something to open California to the knowledge of my countrymen; its geography had been a sealed book. My military operations were conquests without bloodshed; my civil administration was for the public good. I offer California, during my administration, for comparison with the most tranquil portions of the United States; I offer it, in contrast to the condition of New Mexico during the same time.”

It was said that the Secretary of War, who had come into office during his absence, and had never seen him before, could hardly believe his own eyes, when a modest, light, and slender youth reported himself as Lieutenant Fremont, just returned from his expedition to Oregon and North California. His appearance still impresses a similar surprise upon those who know what he has gone through. The explanation is to be found in temperate habits, and a cheerful faith in success; in calm courage to undertake, and patient firmness to bear and go through, whatever duty imposes. The physical frame, if preserved from all enfeebling indulgences, and animated by a well-regulated, contented, and resolute mind, will retain the buoyancy of its spirits and the energy of its forces. An active out-of-door life in the pure mountain air, and indurated by long usage to the elements of nature, will be very

likely to harden a constitution to a high degree of firmness. In this way we are to account for the remarkable evidences of physical endurance recorded in these pages. Often Fremont rode sixty miles a day, swam foaming mountain torrents, slept uncovered, save by a blanket, in pouring rains and on beds of snow, and walked and worked, day after day, without food. So it was with his men. Carson and Godey pursued, attacked, and routed an Indian party, slew two warriors whose hands were yet red with the blood of murdered travellers, and brought in their scalps, having ridden one hundred miles in thirty hours. Fremont accomplished a still more extraordinary feat. Accompanied by Pico, the Californian commandant, whose life he had spared, and Jacob Dodson, he rode from Los Angeles to Monterey, four hundred and eighty miles in three days and ten hours, and after remaining one day, made the return distance within the same time. This is in part to be accounted for, perhaps, by the exhilarating effect of the atmosphere of that region upon all animal life, but it still remains a wonderful illustration of the degree to which the physical energies may be invigorated by habits adapted to strengthen them.

In this connection it is to be observed, as Lieutenant Walpole mentions in the extract quoted from his book, that Fremont's expeditions were conducted on temperance principles. This

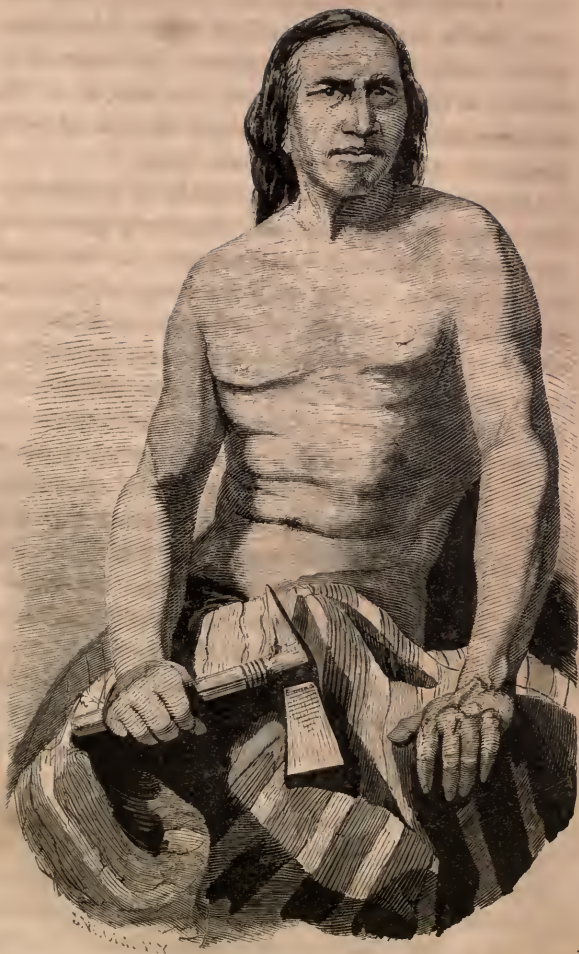
enabled him to maintain the perfection of discipline which won the admiration of all who witnessed the conduct of his battalion. Without any military badges, without even a drum to tap, there was the most exact regularity and order. Without severity there was obedience. Combined with that precision and thoroughness of discipline, there was a singular equality of condition, a pervading, fraternal feeling, that knit them together as one family. Service under Fremont was a school of personal good conduct, and good feeling, and of every manly virtue. The consequence is that those of his men, who have survived their hardships, are, with scarcely a single exception, good citizens, useful members of society, men of commendable habits, and enjoying the prosperity which such characteristics will be likely, in the long run, to command.

The expression "who have survived," leads me to remark that these expeditions, although not considered by some perhaps as entitled to the interest with which liability to death invests the ordinary sphere of warfare, were as fatal to life as the battle-field. Besides, those already mentioned as killed by Indians, frozen, or starved to death, "Bill Williams," the unfortunate guide in the fourth expedition, and one of the brothers, Kern, with several others, were killed by the Indians shortly after Fremont separated from them to pursue his route. Charles Towne was



also killed by Indians on another occasion. Creutzfeldt, and another of the Kerns, were massacred with Captain Gunnison. Derosier, it is feared, never recovered from the effects of his derangement; to which malady the life of poor Preuss became a voluntary sacrifice.

A community of suffering, pride in a joint reputation, a strict discipline voluntarily preserved, observation of each other's worth in the most trying scenes, bound this company of men together by a strength of affection and fidelity which it is most delightful to contemplate. They were severally and always ready to risk life for each other; and there never appeared to be the least jealousy or unworthy rivalry among them. This is itself the highest evidence of the justice and wisdom of their leader. Colonel Fremont could the more easily maintain this unity and harmony among his men, because he treated them all alike. Without losing his dignity, he held the most affectionate relations with even the humblest of his band. Delaware Indians were his body-guard and followed him to the very last. The free colored man, Dodson, was often selected to share with him the most responsible services, and was always recognized as standing on the same level with the rest. He has since married, and lives in Washington. Colonel Fremont has given to each of his three children, 20 acres of California land. In the



One of the Delaware body guard.



postscript of a letter to Colonel Benton, dated July 23, 1855, Carson says: "If Colonel Fremont is with you, give him my kindest remembrances, as also to his excellent lady. I was delighted to see in the papers that his Mariposa grant had been confirmed, for if there is a man living who deserves the blessings of heaven and the gratitude of man, he is one." There is no doubt that every one of his men would heartily indorse the warm expressions of Carson's affection. But it is not the hardy backwoodsman, or the humble Indian or African alone, that becomes thus attached to him. Persons of the highest culture find themselves drawn towards him in the same manner. Captain A. Cathcart, an officer in the British army, nephew of Sir George Cathcart who recently fell in the Crimea, and a gentleman of extensive travel and observation, conversant with all the most distinguished men of his own country, and in European capitals, accompanied Colonel Fremont in his disastrous expedition to the St. John's Mountain. The sufferings and trials of that journey tested the character and qualities of all who shared them, and especially of the commander of the ill-fated party. Captain Cathcart conceived a deep interest in Colonel Fremont, and established a friendship that expresses itself in a permanent correspondence. In 1851, he sent him, as a testimonial of his regard, a handsome

steel-mounted sword, expressly made for him, at London. On the blade is the national motto of the American Union, with the accompanying embellishments beautifully wrought, with these words: "The Hon. Colonel Fremont, from A. Cathcart."

The case of this English gentleman leads to the consideration of the estimation in which foreigners have long held the character and services of Colonel Fremont. The Royal Geographical Society of London elected him a member, of which Mr. Lawrence conveyed information to him, through the Secretary of State. He also transmitted to him the "Founder's or Victoria" gold medal of the same society. The Berlin Geographical Society elected him a member, and sent him a gold medal. The Reports of his first two expeditions were highly commended in all the foreign journals.

The Eclectic Review, in an article on an English reprint of them, expresses itself in the following emphatic and discriminating language.

"The expedition required much physical strength, great courage, and no common skill in meeting the contingencies which daily arose. These were preëminently possessed by Captain Fremont, in happy combination with the knowledge which enabled him to bring from the comparatively unknown region he visited, important contributions to the sciences of astronomy, geography, botany, and geology."

The reference, in this extract, to Colonel Fremont's attainments in knowledge is entirely just. In addition to the branches named, with which he is eminently conversant, his early classical attainments have not been allowed to fade from his memory. Mathematics still continue to engage his chief predilection; and he writes and speaks the French and Spanish with the facility and correctness of a native.

The following passage of a letter from the late Theophile Gay, one of the most eminent French botanists, shows the affectionate and respectful regard in which he is held by scientific men abroad:—

“PARIS, the 27th of October, 1853. }  
“Rue de Vaugirard, No. 36. }

“COLONEL: I received from you, some time since, two most agreeable proofs that you held me in remembrance, and I should have written much sooner in answer, if I had not feared you were already on your way to California, and that my letter would not find you at Washington.

“But your last message, without date, reached me the 5th of October, that is to say, at a date when it would not be prudent to risk one's self for a voyage of several months' length across the North American continent. From that, I conclude that you have deferred your expedition to the coming spring, and consequently will receive in Washington my thanks, and my most sincere



and ardent wishes for the success of this new and perilous expedition.

\* \* \* \* \*

“In a second package, I received the *Plantæ Fremontianæ* of Doctor Torrey, and this has been to me an object of new and very lively gratification; because it was again something personal to you, Colonel, and that you have found a historiographer perfectly up to the level of his task,—not only an historiographer, but an artist-naturalist, (*peintre-naturaliste*,) such as there exist very few of in Europe, and one only in France, (I speak of Riocreux.) I knew him already through the *Plantæ Wightianæ* of Asa Gray, and I esteem it a great good fortune for the botanists of the Union to possess so distinguished an interpreter of their observations. With drawings of such elegance and correctness, the value of the text is doubled.”

In Mrs. Sabine's translation of Humboldt's "Aspects of Nature," the high estimate which that truly great man places upon Fremont's Reports is seen at length. He speaks of his "comprehensive observations," and enlarges on the importance of his expeditions to the cause of science. "As I was, I believe," says he, "the first person who undertook to represent, in geognostic profile, the form of entire countries, it has given me peculiar pleasure to see the graphical method of representing the form of

the earth in a vertical direction, or the elevation of the solid portions of our planet above its watery covering, applied on so grand a scale as has been done in Fremont's map."

A correspondent of the New York Commercial Advertiser, in an article copied into the Boston Journal, in describing a visit to this "Nestor of scientific travellers," says: "The name of Colonel Fremont happening to be mentioned, Humboldt spoke in high praise of his contributions to geographical science, and thought it unfortunate that he had returned, as a prisoner, by the road which he had travelled as an explorer. He thought the day would come when Colonel Fremont's worth would be much better appreciated than at present."

The opinions of the scientific men of his own country were expressed by Professor Silliman in a review of his Reports, in the American Journal of Science and Art, second series. Vol. III. March, 1847.

"Few travellers have encountered greater hardships, and none have exhibited more indomitable courage or untiring zeal." "Captain Fremont's journal is written in a graphic style, bearing evidence of literal accuracy in all its statements, and yet, in many parts, reading like a romance. With deep interest we follow the adventurous traveller, threading his pathless way over lofty ridges, through dense forests, and up

the icy heights." Speaking of the fact that a particular flower had been called "Fremontia," he says: "It is right that this bold explorer of the mountains should have his name inscribed among the flowers of the region, and about its loftiest heights, as well as upon the honored page of history."

Colonel Fremont inherited from his father a particular interest in the Indian tribes of the continent; and no man so well understands their peculiar traits, or knows so well how to deal with them. With Indian wars breaking out from Florida to Puget's Sound, this is no trifling qualification for the administration of our public affairs.

It is said that the Indians of his day admitted General Washington to their heaven, and were of opinion that no other white man would be allowed to enter those celestial hunting-grounds. The Indians of the present day have a similar affection for Fremont. This is not the only point of interesting resemblance between them. The same blood flowed in their veins. The domestic influences under which the mother of Fremont grew up, were derived from the same circle of family connections within which Washington was nurtured. Several of the most impressible years of her son's childhood were passed in that circle, among her kindred in Virginia. The same remarkable prediction was uttered in

the early stages of their career. Though each has been exposed to every peril of the wilderness, and of battle, their lives have been constantly shielded from danger, and no hostile arm has ever reached their persons. When we consider what Fremont has encountered, in cold and hunger, in rapids and rushing rivers, from the tomahawk and the rifle, we may well regard him as "A MAN OF DESTINY," and believe that Heaven has preserved him, also, for some great purpose, yet to be fulfilled. They were both particularly devoted to the mathematical branches of learning, by an early and natural partiality. Both were on the point of being committed for life to the naval service. Both, while scarcely more than boys, commenced the business of surveyors; they both ripened into manhood, carrying the chain and compass in the wildernesses of the Alleghany ranges; and both devoted their speculations and explorations to the same special object. It is well known that more than, and before, all his contemporaries, Washington discerned the importance of connecting the Atlantic States with the interior, and labored to promote it. Following in the steps of the GREAT LEADER, the mind of Fremont has ever been engrossed with similar views and objects. He has led the way, in our day, in opening to view the vast hidden regions between the great mountain ranges of the continent. He first unfurled our

flag on the summits of them both. To his boldness and prompt decision we are indebted for the integrity of our Pacific empire; and, if the great desire of his heart and object of his life is to be accomplished, we shall have a PACIFIC RAILROAD.

His letter to the National Intelligencer of June 13, 1854, closes with these words:—

“It seems a treason against mankind and the spirit of progress which marks the age, to refuse to put this one completing link to our national prosperity and the civilization of the world. Europe still lies between Asia and America; build this railroad, and things will have revolved about; America will lie between Asia and Europe,—the golden vein which runs through the history of the world, will follow the iron track to San Francisco, and the Asiatic trade will finally fall into its last and permanent road, when the ancient and the modern Chryse throw open their gates to the thoroughfare of the world.”

No man can claim the glory of a true American by a better title. He has made the knowledge and the development of the resources of this continent the great end of all his exertions, and has pursued it with a self-sacrificing devotion. His name is stamped with an imprint that can never be obliterated, over the whole breadth of its geography.

Exploring the North American Continent, of



which he has seen more than any other man, with this object in view, he has naturally become devoted to the cause of free labor. It has always been obvious to him, as one would suppose it could not fail to be to every intelligent person, that the realization of the commercial, industrial, social, and moral greatness, of which America is capable, depends vitally and wholly upon maintaining the DIGNITY and the RIGHTS of LABOR. He contended earnestly to make California a free State, and his sympathies are with the struggles of freemen everywhere against the extension of slavery, as his letter to Governor Robinson of Kansas shows. As this letter is a part of the public history of the times, it is presented here.

“New York, 176 Second Avenue, March 17, 1856.

“MY DEAR SIR: Your letter of February reached me in Washington some time since. I read it with much satisfaction. It was a great pleasure to find that you retained so lively a recollection of our intercourse in California. But my own experience is, that permanent and valuable friendships are most often formed in contests and struggles. If a man has good points, then they become salient, and we know each other suddenly.

“I had both been thinking and speaking of you latterly. The Banks balloting in the House



and your movements in Kansas had naturally carried my mind back to our one hundred and forty odd ballots in California, and your letter came seasonably and fitly to complete the connection. We were defeated then; but that contest was only an incident in a great struggle, and the victory was deferred, not lost. You have carried to another field the same principle, with courage and ability to maintain it; and I make you my sincere congratulations on your success—incomplete so far, but destined in the end to triumph absolutely.

“I had been waiting to see what shape the Kansas question would take in congress, that I might be enabled to give you some views in relation to the probable result. Nothing yet has been accomplished; but I am satisfied that in the end congress will take efficient measures to lay before the American people the exact truth concerning your affairs. Neither you nor I can have any doubt what verdict the people will pronounce, upon a truthful exposition. It is to be feared, from the proclamation of the President, that he intends to recognize the usurpation in Kansas, as the legitimate government, and that its sedition law, the test oath, and the means to be taken to expel its people as aliens, will all directly or indirectly be supported by the army of the United States. Your position will undoubtedly be difficult, but you know I

have great confidence in your firmness and prudence. When the critical moment arrives, you must act for yourself—no man can give you counsel. A true man will always find his best counsel in that inspiration which a good cause never fails to give him at the instant of trial. All history teaches us that great results are ruled by a wise Providence, and we are but units in the great plan. Your action will be determined by events as they present themselves, and at this distance I can only say that I sympathize cordially with you; and that, as you stood by me firmly and generously when we were defeated by the Nullifiers in California, I have every disposition to stand by you in the same way in your battle with them in Kansas.

“You see that what I have been saying is more a reply to the suggestions which your condition makes to me, than any answer to your letter, which more particularly regards myself. The notices which you had seen of me, in connection with the Presidency, came from the partial disposition of friends, who think of me more flatteringly than I do of myself, and do not, therefore, call for any action from us. Repeating that I am really and sincerely gratified in the renewal of our old friendship, or rather in the expression of it, which I hope will not

hereafter have so long an interval, I am yours,  
very truly, J. C. FREMONT.

“Gov. CHARLES ROBINSON, Lawrence, Kansas.”

The example of Col. Fremont has been delineated in this work, and is exhibited to his countrymen not for any temporary purpose, but because it ought, from its essential worth and importance, to be placed where all can contemplate it. His personal history is, in many essential particulars, especially in reference to California affairs, the history of the country. But the example is held up, mainly, on account of its moral value to the rising generations of America. The course of John Charles Fremont is a pattern, and his success an encouragement to every noble mind, which, despising sloth and ease, folly and pleasure, aspires to an honorable usefulness to be achieved by meritorious exertions.

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just and kind to his men—the enlightened legislator, watching over the interests and rights of LABOR and INDUSTRY—the scientific scholar, commanding the respect of the learned men of his country and the world—and the far-reaching statesman, embracing the continent in his policy, and giving his life, in an unparalleled service of toil, suffering, and peril, to open a channel through which the wealth of the other continents may flow over its surface, are all before the eyes of the YOUNG MEN OF AMERICA, in the character portrayed on these pages. May the spectacle give ardor to every manly virtue, and inspire all hearts with industry and resolution in self-improvement, with fidelity and courage in the discharge of duty, and with an exalted and comprehensive patriotism.

END.

## FRE-MONT.

My *first* is a thrilling word !  
Dearer than life to those,  
Within whose souls its spirit stirred,  
The call to toil and strife who heard,  
And who a martyr's grave preferred  
To serving foreign foes !

Bright on my *second* beams  
The early morning ray !  
There the sun lingers long, and gleams,  
Like those that haunt us in our dreams  
Of glory, flash in fitful streams,  
As loth to pass away.

My *whole* is a magic name ;  
Our over-arching skies,  
Our hills and valleys, shall proclaim  
Each to the other, all his fame,  
And bear it up, with loud acclaim,  
Where our *free mountains* rise.

M. E M.

March 17, 1856.











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
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